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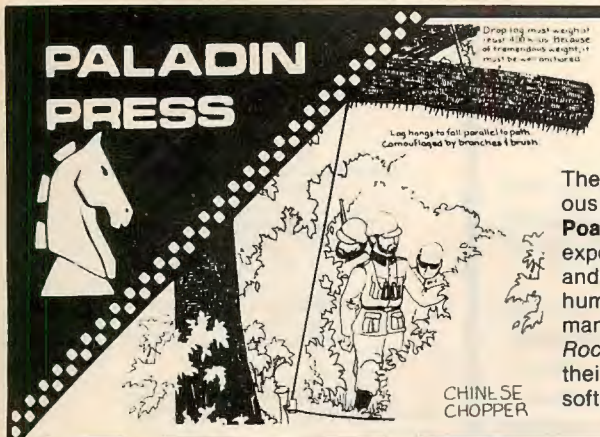

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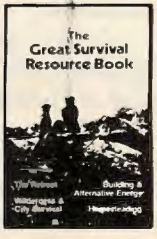

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EDITOR'S NOTES

AFGHANISTAN UPDATE

Hassan Gailani, General Commander of the National Islamic Front (the largest pro-Western guerrilla group in Afghanistan) visited SOF offices in April to receive a large contribution from SOF's Afghan Freedom Fighters' Fund — a fund made possible by readers' contributions.

The Front represents more than 120,000 fighting men in the most heavily embattled sections of Afghanistan: the areas around Kabul, Jalalabad, Gardez, Paktia and Wardak Provinces. The number of freedom fighters would triple overnight if more weapons were available, Gailani reported.

He was in command of 5,000 men in the rugged mountains surrounding Kabul, successfully fighting the Marxist Amin government, when the Soviets invaded in December 1979. Three times Gailani and his men had been within six kilometers of downtown Kabul — and success — when the Russians apparently decided they could not stand by and watch their puppet government go down in flames. They invoked the sham of "fraternal assistance" and seized the country.

"Then, there was nothing we could do. We had no anti-tank rockets, no anti-aircraft weapons," said Gailani. Rather than sacrifice his entire force in a useless gesture, he withdrew under pressure to regroup and plan for a new phase of the war. "In a way, we were happy," Gailani said. "Instead of killing our own people — coerced into fighting for the Russians — we could kill Russians."

NICARAGUAN EXILES

Soldier of Fortune **magazine has learned that some Nicaraguan exiles in Honduras are still active against the communist-backed Sandinista Nicaraguan government.**

The exiles, living in refugee camps along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border, are now short of everything, due to the fact that their funds have been expended in conducting cross-border operations or in arming themselves for defense of their camps. Their most pressing needs are food and clothing; due to the nature of the area they are living in and the activity going on around them, their clothing needs are for serviceable fatigues and boots.

If you have any old fatigues or boots that you either can't wear or don't want, send them to SOF and we will see that they are sent to the exiles. Send them to: SOF, Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters' Relief, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

HEALY RETIRES

Maj. Gen. Michael D. Healy, perhaps the Army's most combat-experienced officer, has retired after 35 years of distinguished service.

Known affectionately by his troops in Vietnam as "Iron Mike," Healy was the nation's highest-ranking Green Beret.

The day of his retirement, he said, "At midnight I'll become a retired soldier — civilian if you will — and I regret it. My main regret is that I can't start all over again. I would like to walk in the back gate at Fort Sheridan like I first did and say: 'Yes sir, I'll go.' "

Healy, who fought in both Korea and Vietnam, was an expert in unconventional warfare and guerrilla tactics. He was wounded several times and won decorations for valor in both wars. During his retirement ceremony he was awarded his third Distinguished Service Medal.

Healy said at the ceremony: "I'm no hero. I'm just a very fortunate and lucky officer who has had the privilege to take care of that ultimate weapon — the American soldier."

Gen. Healy spent five tours — almost eight years — in Vietnam. When he returned to CONUS in 1973, he assumed command of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Iron Mike Healy may have come into the Army via Fort Sheridan's back gate, but when he retired, it was out the front gate he proudly walked.

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COVER: Making war movies means working with what's available: Here Steven Rotblatt (Zirpoli) holds M14 look-alike in *Rumor of War.* USMC PAO Maj. Pat Coulter, technical adviser, helped film makers transform M1 Garands into replicas of the no-longer-available battle rifle. See p. 56 for further details. Photo: CBS

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BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos

MOTHBALL FLEET ...

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger plans to seek Reagan administration approval of a plan to de-mothball four WWII- and Korean War-era battleships as cruise-missile carriers.

Pentagon sources say it would cost about $4 billion to restore the four ships — the *New Jersey, Missouri, Iowa* and *Wisconsin* — as cruise-missile firing platforms.

The last time any of them saw active duty was in 1968 when the *New Jersey* was brought out of mothballs and sent as a support gunship to Vietnam.

DISCHARGE PAPERS ...

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SERVICEMEN INCOME BILL ...

Rep. Philip Crane, R-Ill., has introduced H.R. 1308, the Servicemen's Retention Act, aimed at keeping senior personnel in the services.

Under the measure, an active-duty member of the armed forces would pay no taxes at all on 25 percent of his salary after four years' experience. If he remains in past eight years, the exclusion rises to 35 percent of his salary; past 12 years, 40 percent and past 16 years, 50 percent.

Crane said he believes that, if enacted, the legislation would serve to "induce enlistment, bolster morale, encourage retention and, ultimately, strengthen the all-volunteer force."

BOTT MIA ...

The parents of Staff Sgt. Russel P. Bott, former 5th Special Forces Group, would like to hear from anyone who knew him or has information about his disappearance in Laos in 1966. Bott was reported MIA in Laos' Savannakhet Province in December of that year and his parents have conducted an unsuccessful 10-year search for information about the circumstances.

Information may be sent to: P.O. Box 431, Lancaster, MA 01561.

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Continued on page 72

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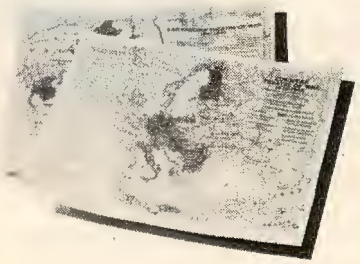

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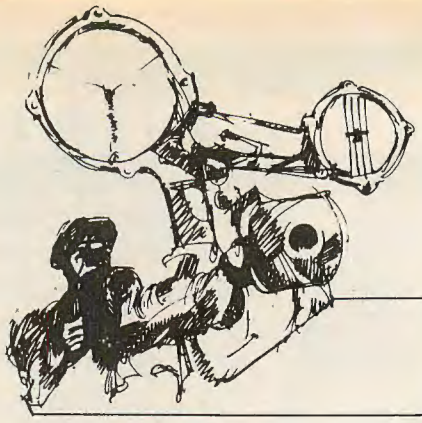

FLAK

QUESTIONS TO JEFF COOPER ...

Sir:

As I'm sure you are aware, our military is considering dropping the venerable .45 ACP 1911-A1 for the greatly inferior 9mm parabellum of our European allies. I am sure you realize the gravity of this mistake. Just what, sir, can be done to abort this error? If you wonder at my animosity in regard to this "improvement," let me explain.

Some time ago, I met an Israeli colonel who had been in every major Israeli conflict since the mid-'40s. Israel uses the 9mm extensively. My acquaintance's comment on the effectiveness of the 9mm which he has had to use for so long: "From here to the door, it usually won't take more than three or four rounds to drop the SOB." The door was perhaps 15 feet distant.

Let us also look at an occurrence with the Illinois State Police. A trooper drilled eight kill-zone hits in an armed felon, who stood stunned, until he dropped dead from loss of blood.

If there is some way to protest this 9mm fiasco, please enlighten me.

With utmost respect,
George F. Littlejohn
New Britain, Connecticut

Jeff Cooper replies:

Your concern is understandable, and your points are well taken. I have been besieged by sheaves of letters of outrage since the word first got around that the U.S. Defense Department was preparing its Great Leap Backward in handgun policy, and my response has been as follows:

At first glance it does seem queer that America — the only major power to understand and appreciate the pistol — should consider scrapping its marvelous, epoch-making sidearm, the undisputed champion of the world, for something strikingly less efficient — especially one using a cartridge that is even older than ours and which wasn't much good way back in 1908 when it was introduced.

If we look more deeply into the matter, however, we can detect some reasons.

To begin, a pistol is just not important to an army, no matter how it may seem to a soldier. Battles are not won with pistols. Pistols sometimes save the lives of soldiers, but while that is terribly important to the man involved, it is of scant concern to his government.

A friend of mine commanded a battalion at Iwo, and in that fight he went through three sets of lieutenants, either killed or otherwise hors de combat. *That's about 75 officers. Perhaps two or three of those young men might have saved themselves by expert use of a handgun. That would have been felicitous for them but it would have had no effect at all upon the outcome of the battle, so it just does not matter whether they carried the splendid .45 Colt, the five-and-dime U.S. Carbine*

Continued on page 76

Announcing a limited offering of superior quality collector pistol stocks.

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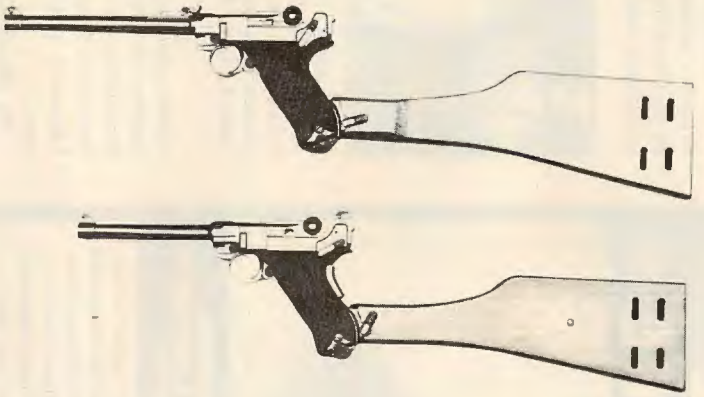

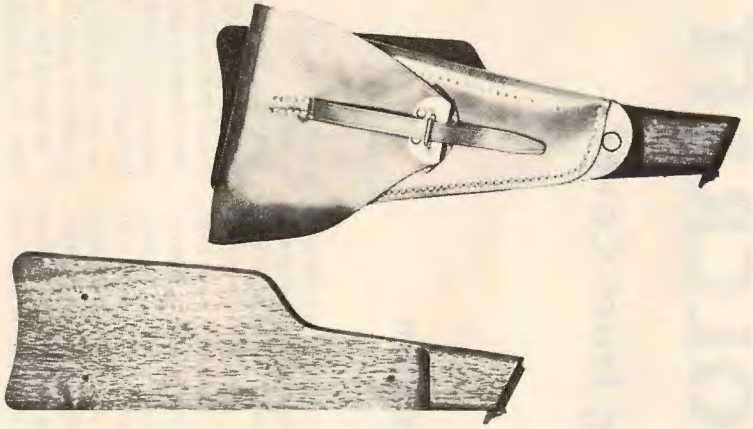

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COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

Shooting From Cover

Ken Hackathorn

ONE of the most interesting concepts of the new pistolcraft technique is that of shooting from cover in practical pistol competition. Since the early 1960s, many match designers have had the contestant fire at his targets from a well-protected position — usually a portable wooden barricade. A number of courses require the contestant to shoot from the barricade while keeping his feet within a confined space, which means only a small part of the body is exposed while firing. I am afraid, however, that proper use of cover has been limited in practical-shooting practice and police-training programs. How do we teach a student to fire from cover with good results?

"Cover" is a means of protecting your hide from hostile fire. On the street, anything that serves this end is acceptable. Most pistol ranges lack any form of natural cover, and students — be they police officers or practical pistol shooters — are usually asked to solve tactical problems without having any cover.

It would be simple to pull an automobile, for example, onto the firing range and then require students to use it as cover while engaging targets. This would simulate street action. Any police-academy instructor or training-range officer who fails to teach use of proper, protected firing positions is naive.

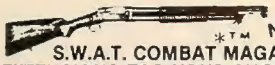
John Farnam, well known as a police firearms instructor, goes to great lengths to combine the best of various firearms programs with his Duelatron-II elec-

John Farnam (right), whose Duelatron defense system is outlined in this month's Combat Pistolcraft, compares tactics on a defensive scenario with Andy Langley. Photo: Greg Moats

tronic training system. Farnam wisely teaches that cover is critical to survival. Practical pistol shooters can learn much from the teaching techniques used in Farnam's police-firearms-training seminars.

An officer will normally seek cover at the first sign of danger, but he should learn how to shoot from cover, achieving maximum hits and minimum exposure. Although police officers are expected to do this, they are not taught how. Once safely behind cover, an officer can plan

Continued on page 82



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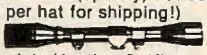

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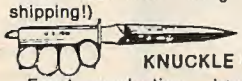

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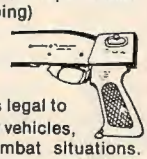

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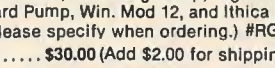

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IN REVIEW

GOODBYE, DARKNESS — A Memoir of the Pacific War. By William Manchester. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1980. 401 pp. $14.95. Review by William Brooks.

WILLIAM Manchester needs no introduction. Noted author of *The Death of a President*, *The Arms of Krupp* and *American Caesar*, Manchester has written 13 books. He is writer-in-residence at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., and a Marine combat veteran of WWII.

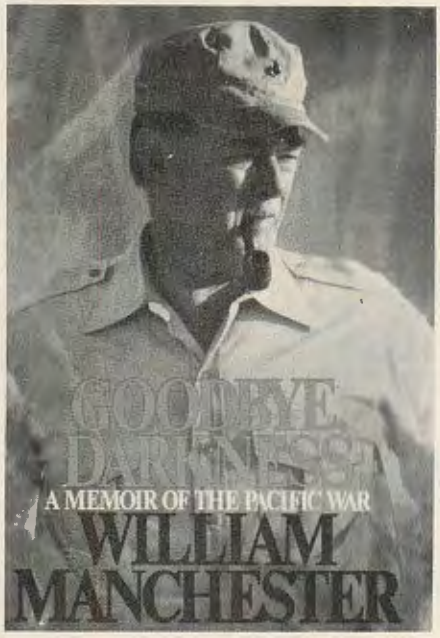
Goodbye, Darkness is a memoir of his experiences in the Pacific between 1942 and 1945, a life where "...death sought me, during which time I was transformed from a cheeky youth to a troubled man who, for over thirty years, repressed what he could not bear to remember."

Postwar literature is satiated with accounts of European campaigns, but the general public has remained comparatively ignorant of the most barbarous fighting of the war — the South Pacific: a theater comparable only to the Russo-German Front — where the dead were stacked like cordwood; where men slept with corpses and used them to build barricades. Neither side showed compassion, quarter was rarely asked and seldom given, and the enemy was considered subhuman.

Haunted by nightmares of the war and by an overpowering sense of loss, the author returns to the hallowed islands where thousands of his generation gave their lives. Manchester walks the beaches where Americans attacked the Japanese, and climbs again the trails he had known as a scared young sergeant leading a section of raggedy-assed Marines into savage combat.

Once more he digs a foxhole and spends the night alone on an eerie jungle ridge waiting for the dreadful dreams to pounce:

"The air was rank with the stench of feces and decomposing flesh, and the cratered surface looked like hell with the fire out. Two men were trudging upward from opposite sides. One, wearing muddy battle dungarees and the camouflaged helmet cover that we wore to distinguish us from Army infantrymen, was the scrawny, Atabrine-yellow, cocky young sergeant of Marines who had borne my name in 1945. The other was the portly, balding, Brooks-Brothered man who bears it today."



Throughout his quest, the author is frequently astonished at how the trappings of junk-civilization have defiled what he knows to be sacred ground, mocking the valor of the past:

"...A monument to the Marine dead defaced by graffiti. But perhaps the memorial deserves no better, for as we read it together we see that it is clearly self-serving. 'Tarawa,' the plaque reads, 'was the testing ground for Marine amphibious doctrine and techniques. It paved the way for the island campaigning that followed and provided answers that saved thousands of American lives along the road to victory in the Pacific.' Tony turns away. He mutters, 'That's what the British said about Dieppe.' "

Goodbye, Darkness is also the story of his section — those nine "raggedy-assed Marines," few of whom escaped the war alive or unmaimed — and those who did have lived out their lives afflicted with survivor's guilt.

In the end, Manchester unexpectedly finds himself on Okinawa's Sugar Loaf Hill, where in nine days 7,547 Marines fell, near the spot where, on a distant June morning in 1945, he also had been gravely wounded and left for dead.

"So I have nightmares, and so I have returned to the islands to exorcise my inner darkness with the light of understanding."

Manchester arrives at a profound understanding. An understanding of the meaning of the Pacific war and why he fought, and of an America changed; changed to the point where Manchester is convinced that the youth of today are incapable of performing the sacrifices of all-out war:

"...Dazed by the thought of waves of Marines plodding patiently on and on and on toward objectives such as Tarawa's Betio Beach while their comrades keel over on all sides. The United States was a different country then ... the chasm between generations is one explanation. Perhaps it is the only one."

The author believes that the current generation is wanting: lacking in nationalism, lacking in sensitivity for family life, romantic love, sympathy, hospitality, manners and a cultivated ethic for honest work. To a youth in 1944, "the thought of accepting unemployment compensation, had it existed, would have been considered humiliating."

Intense, impassioned and highly readable, **Goodbye, Darkness** is one of the most important books written about men at war. Manchester brings home to the reader the misery and horror of combat and what it is like to fight and be wounded and die in the hell and confusion, the blood and filth of battle. **Goodbye, Darkness** is not only a testimony to the fortitude of man, it is a testimony to the grandeur of the United States Marine Corps.

...And then, in one of those great thundering jolts in which a man's real motives are revealed to him in an electrifying vision, I understood, at last, why I jumped hospital that long-ago Sunday and, in violation of orders, returned to the front and almost certain death.

It was an act of love. Those men on the line were my family, my home. They were closer to me than I can say, closer than any friends had been or ever would be. They were comrades: three of them had saved my life. They had never let me down and I couldn't do it to them. I had to be with them, rather than let them die and me live with the knowledge that I might have saved them. Men, I now knew, do not fight for flag or country, for the Marine Corps or glory or any other abstraction. They fight for their friends. Any man in combat who lacks comrades who will die for him, or for whom he is willing to die, is not a man at all.

He is truly damned.

—Historian William Manchester, after visiting Okinawa on the 35th anniversary of the day he was badly wounded there while serving as a sergeant in the 29th Marine Regiment.

French Foreign legionnaire turned librarian, Bill Brooks is a familiar name to most of our readers. His exceptional knowledge of military history combined with his flare for writing lends a valuable perspective to a book such as **Goodbye, Darkness.**

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IT HAPPENED TO ME

by Robert Wallisch as told to M.L. Jones

Robert Wallisch was a paratrooper with the 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division, when his division was sent to the Dominican Republic after its spring 1965 revolution began. The 82nd arrived on 5 May and ramrodded a supply corridor through the capital city of Santo Domingo. By the end of the month, Wallisch's battalion was guarding a sector of this route from positions in surrounding houses and small buildings. As he tells it:

THE month-old Dominican revolution had come to a stalemate. Rebels held Santo Domingo's older section, which was bordered on the east by the Ozama River and on the south by the Caribbean. From our positions along the supply corridor we could see hostile zones to each side.

That sweltering morning, I climbed four stories to the roof to retrieve my laundry. I looked around. In the rebel zone, heaps of garbage burned in the streets and smudged the air phlegm-yellow. A riot of carnival-colored houses fanned out below and stretched toward the obscure horizon.

Gunners manning a 3.5-inch rocket launcher and an M60 machine gun shared the roof with me and were also observing the city. Their weapons were sandbagged along the parapet.

As I reached for my last T-shirt, I heard the bowel-loosening roar of a large piston-driven engine. Whirling, I saw a P-51 Mustang fighter on the deck, coming "balls to the wall" at us. I flopped down. It tore by, blasting us with its powerful prop-wash.

A ripping burst from the M60 split the air and followed in the plane's wake. Time compressed as I lay flat on the roof.

I heard a clicking sound, and I turned my head and looked into the gaping exhaust of the 3.5. Incredibly, the gunner had shouldered the launcher and was trying to fire an anti-tank rocket at the fighter — with me in the back-blast area. An obscenity and four or five rolls put me clear.

As we watched the rapidly retreating plane, we saw it begin to climb, trailing a plume of dark smoke. Then it merged into the curtain of smog and disappeared from sight.

Later that day we heard that the P-51 had initially strafed the rebel radio station and then overshot into our lines. The ragged row of fist-sized holes that stitched our south parapet attested to that. The Dominican pilot exited the fighter as it climbed, but "streamered" into a cane field on the outskirts of the city. The plane crashed nearby.

U.S.-supported loyalists had launched this pre-emptive air strike but failed to notify our command of their brain storm. As a result, elements of the 82nd's 1st Squadron, 17th Cav., were sent to San Isidro Airbase to make sure that no more P-51s took off. Their .50-caliber MGs emphasized their position.

Whether ground fire was responsible for bringing the plane down is open to speculation. Many other troopers shot at it. Fortunately for me, the 3.5 failed to fire because of a short in its ignition system. Naturally, I had no regularity problems for the next few days.

I WAS THERE

by William E. Morgan as told to M.L. Jones

William E. Morgan served in the U.S. Navy from 1975 to 1980 as a hospital corpsman, second class, and was stationed with a Marine Recon company for three years. Now a college student, Morgan has a total of 10 years' diving experience. In August 1979, he was on submarine-scuba insertion-and-extraction exercises off the coast of Okinawa. As he tells it:

TO me, that old saying, "You haven't lived until you've almost died," has special meaning since I nearly drowned during a submarine-escape-trunk-lock out-lock in the waters off Okinawa.

In training, we use scuba equipment to lock out of the submarine's escape trunk while the sub is submerged. Then we compass-swim to shore underwater in order to arrive on a hostile beach completely undetected. We then carry out our recon patrol, return to the beach, don our scuba gear, re-enter the water and rendezvous with the submarine.

Locking out of the trunk was easy. We had no problems until it was time to lock back in. My dive buddy, USMC Cpl. Parker, and I held on to the safety line, waiting our turn to lock back in.

Suddenly, the sub moved forward — and dove deeper. We held on for all we were worth as its speed increased — until we were torn from the safety line and slammed into the conning tower. It felt like being hit by a locomotive.

I was momentarily stunned. As I began to get my head back together, I realized my scuba bottles were tangled in the safety line and I was being dragged by the submarine through the water. (Parker was able to swim away.)

I tried to stay calm and "ride it out," hoping the sub would stop. I found out later that the escape trunk had been filled with outside rather than ballast water, and the skipper had to move the ship forward to maintain its level in the water.

The sub leveled off — but its speed increased. My dive mask was torn from my face and my regulator torn out of my mouth by the force of rushing water. I searched wildly for the regulator. I finally found it and shoved it back in my mouth. I took three good, long breaths before it stopped working, probably due to water rushing through it.

I was in big trouble. I tried to grab my dive knife to cut myself free, but the speed of the water rushing over me pinned my arms to my sides. I began to feel dizzy. I had tunnel vision. I was drowning.

I mustered all my strength to reach up and pull the quick-release straps on my scuba bottles. I did it! I was free.

I thought my heart would explode when I reached the surface.

I popped my flare for the safety boat to pick me up. I thought they'd be happy to see that I was still alive — but the first thing the OIC (officer in charge) of the dive did was to chew my ass for losing government gear. I didn't mind — I was alive.

IF you have a combat or adventure story for "It Happened to Me" or "I Was There," triple-space type it and send it to SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, Attn: M.L. Jones. All stories should be 500 words or less. Upon publication, SOF will become owner of all publication rights. Submitted articles are subject to editing and revision, although their content and theme will not be changed.

Photos (with captions and credits) are also helpful. Captions should be typed on a separate sheet of paper and keyed to each photograph.

Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope so we can notify you of acceptance or return your story. Article payment is $50, upon publication. All entrants will receive an SOF patch.

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April, 1974 - while working on my farm, I accidentally tipped a heavy, steel ladder holding a chicken roost in place. The ladder crashed down on my face, ripping completely through half my nose. Intense pain and bleeding followed.

Though stunned, I managed to keep my senses enough to grab G-Jo point 13 a special spot on my hand—and performed G-Jo for 30 seconds. Within moments, the pain—and the bleeding—ceased!

When those symptoms returned, I simply used G-Jo again. This serious wound healed quickly and cleanly—without doctors, drugs or stitches!

You can use G-Jo for any "typical" first-aid situation -plus *hundreds* of other health problems for which no standard first-aid techniques exist.

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It seems hard to believe that you could "trigger" a tiny spot on your hand, for example, and instantly counteract a harsh facial wound (or merely a splitting headache, for that matter). Yet this is *exactly* what I am saying.

116 powerful G-Jo acupressure points are hidden throughout your body. When you know how to find -and trigger—your own G-Jo points, you can "control" (relieve and heal) nearly any bodily area or function with just the touch of your finger. Hard to believe, perhaps but true.

Proven in front of millions

To prove my point, I appear regularly on many of the world's most popular radio and TV talk shows. There, I invite any person to phone in and bring himself instant relief with my simple directions.

I'm always swamped with calls many of them from very skeptical people, I can assure you yet my "track record" is nearly 100%. That's live over the air!

Not only for emergencies

I don't want you to think that G-Jo is only good for emergencies or survival situations. Far from it.

In fact, it's most often used for everyday symptoms the kind of ailments you'd treat with aspirin, antacids or other such remedies.

Indigestion...allergies...asthma...burns... low back pain (and pain any place else in the body, as well) there are more than 250 common health problems you can effectively treat using G-Jo.

Not only is G-Jo a good way to get well, it's an excellent way to *stay* well. When you use G-Jo at the first sign of discomfort, you can stop and actually "reverse" most ailments and health problems before they can become serious.

Tragedy averted using G-Jo

Nonetheless, it's comforting to know you *can* handle even life-threatening situations with G-Jo.

October, 1979 on a rain-swept European highway, I came upon a serious car accident. A woman sat crushed between the seat and dash of her small car. She was very pale and barely breathing. Shock perhaps death seemed imminent.

I reached for her wrist and found G-Jo point 10...triggered it for a few seconds... repeated the process on the other wrist...

Color surged back into her face. She opened her eyes and smiled to let me know she was conscious and her pain was relieved. Witnesses at the scene gasped in amazement.

It takes only seconds to perform this easy, three-step process. Yet G-Jo is so powerful it could even save your life—or the life of a loved one.

Learn G-Jo in minutes

You'd think that a skill this awesome would take months or years to learn. But, no—you can *master* G-Jo in as little as half an hour.

Nor do you need a college education to become a G-Jo "self-health" expert. Even grade-school children find G-Jo easy to learn and easy to use.

What you *do* need, however, is a way to learn G-Jo then for finding the right G-Jo point when you need it. All this information is described and illustrated in my G-Jo learning manual, **The Natural Healer's Acupressure Handbook.**

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Here you will find all 116 G-Jo points detailed in precise illustrations...more than 250 symptoms and health problems you can effectively treat with G-Jo...all put together in an easy-to-use manner.

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17-20 September 1981

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The SOF CONVENTION is being held in conjunction with the 2nd Annual SOF Invitational Combined Shooting Championship — a shotgun, pistol and assault-rifle combat shoot to pick the top U.S. all-around combat marksman in the United States. One hundred and fifty top shooters will compete, by invitation only, for over $20,000 in prize money, guns and gear.

The theme of the convention will be "A Salute to Vietnam Veterans." The Colonel "Bull" Simons Memorial Award will be dedicated to all Vietnam veterans and will be accepted for them by a Medal of Honor winner. The keynote speaker for the banquet will be selected at a later date. Once again, cammies or police or military uniforms will be preferred dress.

Registration will be $75 if you pre-register and $100 if you register during the convention. Fee will include: (1) Banquet (2) Transportation to all events (3) Convention T-Shirt (4) Admission to Exhibition Hall (5) Admission to Invitational Match (6) Admission to all demonstrations (7) Admission to outstanding action movies (8) Admission to Vietnam Art Exhibit (9) Admission to a Cocktail Hour and (10) Admission to all seminars.

Seminars will include: Special Operations Group in Vietnam, presented by vets who conducted cross-border operations in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam; POW/MIA; Police Survival; Desert Survival/Escape & Evasion; Survival Medicine & Gunshot Wounds; Russian Small-Unit Tactics & Weapons; plus others on Southern Africa, Central America and Afghanistan.

The 1st Airborne will once again offer a jump school, as well as the opportunity for static-line and free-fall parachuting.

Demonstrations will include automatic weapons, night-firing devices including laser systems, knife throwing and combat-shotgun shooting.

Also, John Farnam will conduct a Handgun Tactical-Combat Course with his famous Duelatron system for $5.00 per entrant. Contestants will be allowed multiple entries at $5.00 each.

Once again, a limited number of display tables for exhibitors and manufacturers will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested parties should contact SOF Convention/Exhibitor Coordinator Ron Powles (303) 449-3750 immediately for space reservations and further information.

Room assignments at the Headquarters Hotels — the Radisson Scottsdale Resort and Racquet Club (conventioneers) and the Sheraton Scottsdale Inn (shooters and conventioneers) — will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Rooms will cost $30 per night, single or double occupancy, in the Radisson and $35 per night, single or double occupancy, in the Sheraton. (Hotels are within one-fifth mile of each other.)

Hotel reservations will be handled by Jeana Nugent of The Meeting Planners and Miles Travel (see hotel reservation form below for telephone number and address). Miss Nugent will also handle pre- and post-convention travel for those who desire it.

Preceding the convention, SOF is also offering a limited number of spaces — on a first-come, first-served basis — in the following courses running from 0800 12 September to 1700 17 September: (1) Combat Pistolcraft (2) Assault-Rifle (3) Combat-Shotgun (4) Desert Survival/Escape & Evasion (5) Survival Medicine and Combat Wounds (6) 5,000-Meter Combat Run & Shoot.

Costs for each course, and the cost and prizes for the 5,000-Meter Combat Run & Shoot, will be determined at a later date.

All convention activities are tentative.

Do not delay!

Fill out the convention-registration and hotel-reservation forms below and mail them to their respective addresses today!

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

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Current or previous military or police affiliation: _____

YES, I'm coming to the 2nd Annual SOF Convention, check enclosed for:

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Detailed information on courses preceding the conference, which are scheduled for 12-17 September, will be mailed directly to persons who indicate an interest in attending by checking the corresponding box(es): ☐ Combat Pistolcraft; ☐ Assault Rifle; ☐ Combat Shotgun; ☐ Desert Survival/Escape & Evasion; ☐ Survival Medicine/Combat Wounds; ☐ 5,000-Meter Combat Run & Shoot (date not set).

MAIL TO: SOF Convention P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306

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1. Radisson Scottsdale, $30 per night, single or double occupancy: _____
2. Sheraton Scottsdale, $35 per night, single or double occupancy: _____

Arrival date: _____ Departure date: _____

If hotel requested is not available, nearest available hotel will be assigned. Rates are subject to applicable taxes. Accommodations will not be confirmed without a check for the first-night's deposit or American Express card number to guarantee reservation. Registrants will be charged for the first night if reservations are not cancelled at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

AMEX No. _____ Expiration Date _____

MAIL TO: Jeana Nugent, The Meeting Planners and Miles Travel, 5656 East Orange Blossom, Phoenix, AZ 85018. (Special group airfares may also be available through Miss Nugent. Call 602-231-0200.)

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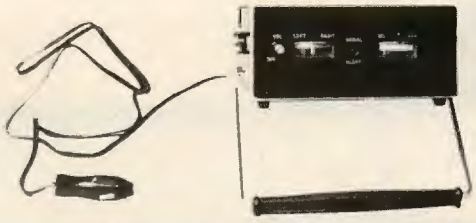

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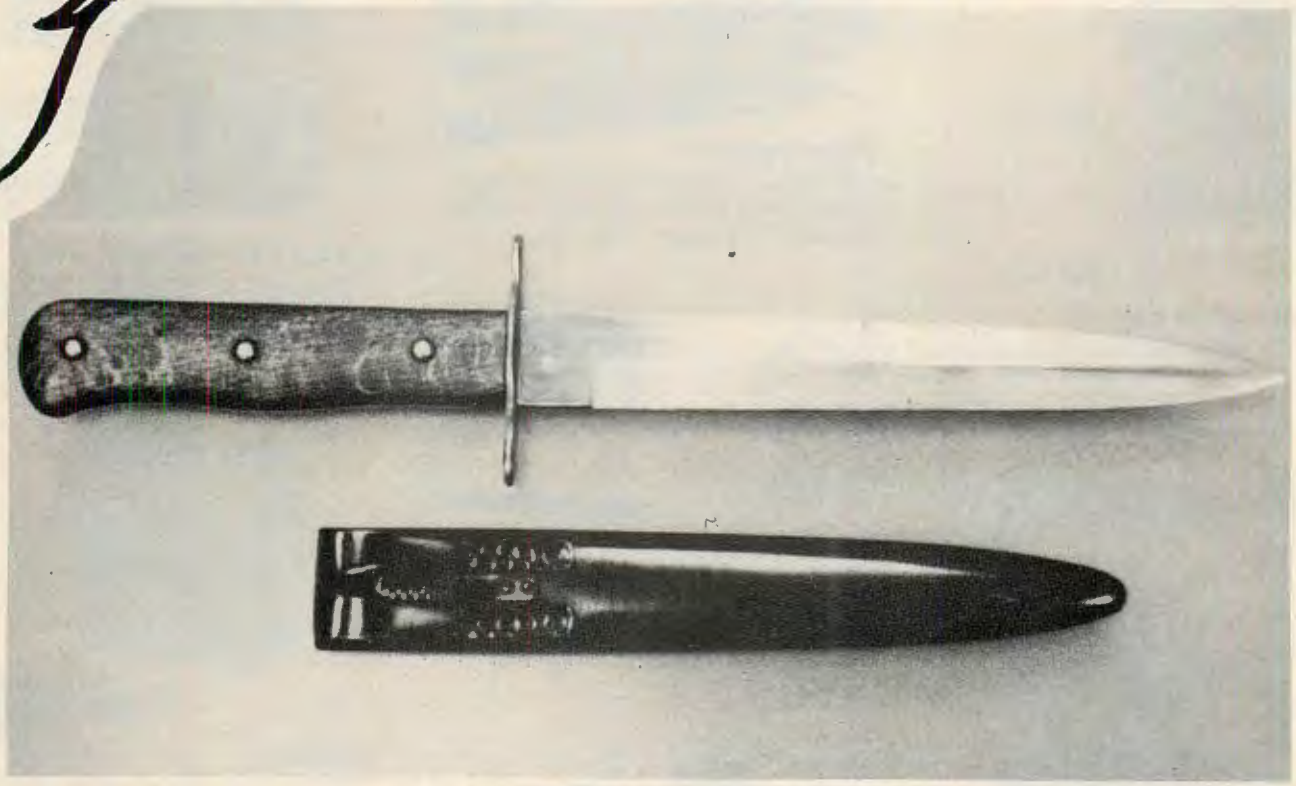
der Stiefelmesser

by Sgt. Gary Paul Johnston



Stiefelmesser, German WWII paratroop bootknife, and its sheath with unique boot clip.

SINCE prehistoric man first shaped bone and flint, fighting knives of countless configurations have been his companions into battles long forgotten. We have seen the Bowies, the bolos and the trench knives carve their places in history over the past century, but always, it seems, there has been the dagger. Strong, light, no longer than necessary and ever effective, the dagger is what we have continued to return to.

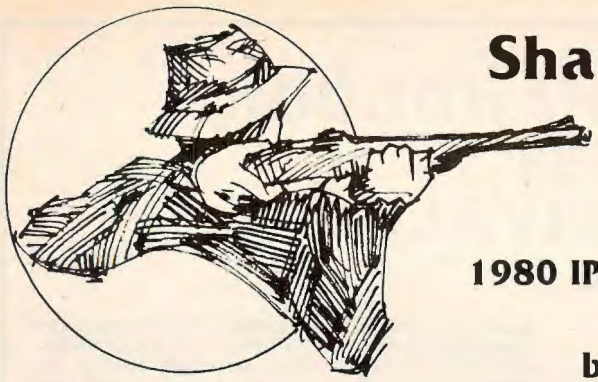
The dagger, too, has come to us in various forms over the years, but during the last few decades one basic style has prevailed in military circles. This is the spear-point blade with false edge. You may know it as "Quicksilver," "Command," the U.S. M3 fighting knife or any one of numerous U.S. and foreign bayonets, which are designed to double as fighting knives.

During World War II, the Germans knew this style of knife as the *Stiefelmesser,* or bootknife. Reportedly issued only to paratroops and other elite units, relatively few *Stiefelmessers* were encountered, or survived the war. The concept of this fighting knife did survive, however, and it is likely that we will see it in service in some form for many years to come.

The *Stiefelmesser* was a relatively inexpensive knife, probably intended for mass production. As could be expected, the Wehrmacht put most of the effort where it counted — in the blade, which is made of a high-quality carbon steel. The working end is 6-5/8-inches long, with an overall length of 11 inches. The guard (hilt) is small for concealability and narrow, as is the handle, which consists of two hardwood scales riveted together through the full-length tang.

The sheath is typically German, being formed steel with an inner spring retainer for the knife. The boot clip is somewhat unique, having three knurled springs, two opposing the other, much like two fingers opposing the thumb. The edge of the boot is forced up between these fingers as the sheath is attached.

As did many other German innovations of World War II, *der Stiefelmesser* served as a model for the future.



Sharpshooting With Chairman Jeff

1980 IPSC National Course Design

by Jeff Cooper

FROM the beginning of the practical shooting movement — first in America and then worldwide — we have been harassed by an elemental dichotomy between those who see the sport as a mirror of reality, and those who regard it as just another game in which the only important thing is the final score. The first group sought to explore the almost unknown world of modern pistolcraft, while the second sought recreation and ego support. While it was probably inevitable that we had to choose sides, it was a great pity, because the realists constituted the minority and had to fight a continuous rear-guard battle to keep practical shooting practical.

The strongest weapon the realists wield is that of course design. Practical shooting differs from almost all other sports in its insistence upon a constantly varied challenge. The extent to which any artificial challenge becomes fixed in form is the extent to which it departs from reality. Obviously the challenge in any sporting contest stipulated, it could only be kept a surprise if just one person knew about it prior to its execution.

Principle Of Surprise

There is little doubt that any major course of competition in the practical discipline must be a surprise. Practice is clearly necessary to novices, so that they may develop their skills, but when you suddenly find your life threatened on the street, the circumstances are not likely to have been set forth in advance so that you have had the time to work out the details.

The best test is a total surprise, which is not divulged to you until you stand on the firing line, but such a test is difficult to administer to any but a very small group of contestants, since those who have been tested must be kept incommunicado until all have finished. (I once sat in the holding area from 0830 until about 1300. This was
recall the occasion
ecause I won. You
you win, assuming
was good.)
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The important thing is that the 1980 U.S. Nationals were designed, by order of the general meeting of 1979, by one man rather than a committee. That order was carried out, and the result was a series of qualifying trials followed by the championship proper. The rationale was the reconciliation of the drawbacks of the semi-surprise concept with those of the total surprise. This is a somewhat complex philosophical point not always understood by those ungrounded in the theory of practical shooting.

Each of the five qualifying legs had its own theoretical base and each tested a different set of skills. The "track-meet heresy" was rejected to the extent that no one could say that he failed to qualify because he was not a track star. Only one contest called for acrobatics and that one was compact enough to avoid making aerobic stamina a critical factor. Except for the first trial, properly termed "Basics" rather than "Standards," each effort was an approximation of a tactical confrontation, or series of confrontations. To qualify for the main event the shooter had to do pretty well on all five preliminaries, and very well indeed on at least two. That means that he was a *very* good shot. If he worked from a realistic holster he was a champion.

(The new IPSC holster rule, which specifies practical holsters, did not go into effect until this year.)

Stage by stage, the 1980 U.S. Qualifications were set up as follows:

I. Basics

There were a series of pairs, fired in fixed times at five distances and from four starting positions. Basic defensive tactics always demand two shots per stroke unless there is some obvious reason for one, or three, made apparent during the stroke. The imperative one-shot stop is a head shot; otherwise we shoot twice, observe, and correct if necessary.

The times were 1½ seconds at five meters, 2 at 10, 2½ at 15, 3 at 25, and 6 at 50. Three pairs were fired at five and 10 meters, and two pairs at 15, 25 and 50, giving the edge to the shorter distances as field experience dictates.

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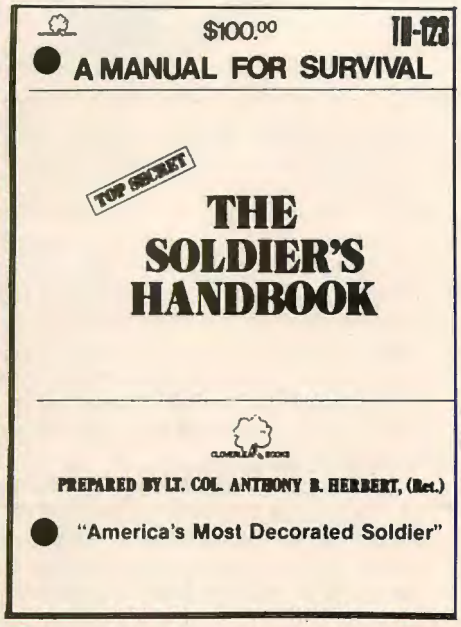

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ANTHONY B. HERBERT
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Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Wednesday, Aug. 27

The book's already a big hit among old military hands, narcotics folk, cops, corporations and individuals with more than just a little to protect. And, promises Herbert, the book will be updated periodically. Which might prove necessary. After all, you never know when another Noble Cause may come loping around the next corner. □

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An innovation was the use of screens at the 50-yard line which enjoined the prone position. We tend to overwork prone at distance, forgetting that most of the time you cannot see very much when lying on your stomach. This tends to inhibit our understanding of the braced kneeling position — to our evident disadvantage.

Nobody cleaned the Basics, but the best people came within a couple of points — like 117 out of 120. This is evidence that the degree of difficulty was exactly matched against available talent, which was the designer's objective.

II. Speed

This placed the shooter in the center of three targets at five meters' distance each. The hypothesis was that one man, starting holstered, can save his life when surrounded by three armed men who will shoot him if he resists. Only head shots may be counted, because if you must catch Number Three before he can pull his trigger you have only time for one shot each on Number One and Number Two — *and that one shot must not fail.* A trained man, if he is ready, can hit you at five yards in two seconds. It is up to you to see that he does not get the chance.

This is very hard. It is not, however, impossible — as some have opined. It probably is impossible on demand. I don't think even Ross Seyfried can do it every time, but anyone of international status can do it once in a while. The test was to find out how often. It is truly imposing when done right — a marvelous illustration of just how far the art of the pistol has come in one short lifetime.

The three-shot stroke was repeated eight times, and I had hoped that the stars would attempt to creep up on it, making sure of one, then two, and then going for broke on their last attempts. But it proved too intimidating, and only a couple of heroes gave it their full blast. (One cannot but wonder how many would have given up if their lives really had been at stake.)

III. Scramble

It is a point of doctrine that any course of fire that can be handled better with a rifle or a carbine is a poor course of fire for a pistol. I set out here to pose a problem that could be properly solved with a pistol, but which would defeat a rifle. One scrambles better with a pistol than with a rifle, so I dedicated this one to the "orang-attack" of GSG-9.

This stage simulated problems which might be posed in an urban environment, such as firing over walls, around corners and from cramped and unfamiliar positions. An innovation was the elevated crawl-tunnel presenting targets to be engaged from side ports. Another was the mounting of the required "Item" targets at 45-degree angles, in the understanding that one's adversary is unlikely always to be standing fully erect. A third novelty was the timing system. After testing the equipment as set up on the day before the match, I arrived at a par time of 30 seconds in which to move from the start line to the final firing point, engaging 10 targets twice each on the way.

Therefore, 30 seconds after the starting whistle the two running targets were activated, moving some 50 feet in five seconds. This required the contestant to move and shoot very quickly — "championship style" — if he hoped to get a clear opportunity on the runners. Double discounts were exacted for any runners that "got away," in order to obviate a sedate pace and forfeiture of the moving targets. (Course designers must anticipate "sandbagging," since not all contestants are gentlemen.)

The Scramble demanded ability and coordination, but it did not call for any unusual degree of strength or stature, nor for much "wind." It could nowise be correctly called a track meet.

Reaching

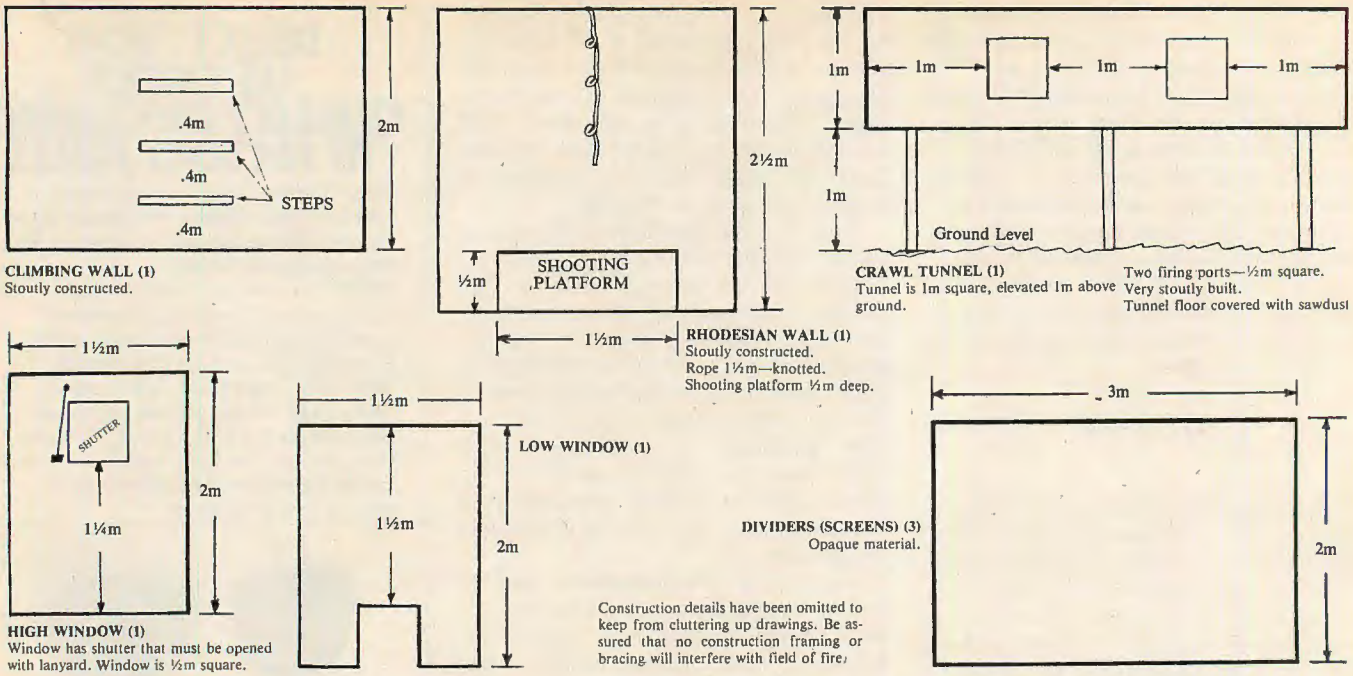
This was a test of the shooter's ability to defend himself against intruders who were better armed than he — specifically with rifles or carbines. The hypothesis postulated a man working around his farm (ranch, "retreat" or other detached habitation) who was wearing his pistol but out of reach of heavier weapons when he noticed that his house was being approached by armed men who had not yet seen him. To protect his home and family he was obliged to engage these attackers in a way that they could not readily counter. This meant firing rapidly and accurately, from cover, at ranges great enough to render his location uncertain to his antagonists.

The first firing point represented a window in, say, an adjoining barn. It had to be held open while shooting. The range was 40 meters. The second point required a ground shot, as from beneath a tractor or water trough. Range on this one was 60 meters. The third point, at 50 meters, was screened against prone, simulating high grass or a rock pile.

To demand all haste compatible with efficient bullet placement this whole stage was Comstock scored, with double penalties for any papers not punched. Anyone you didn't get got you.

Our so-called "jungle lanes" have been properly denigrated by the charge that one does not indulge in suicidal assaults, armed only with a pistol, against multiple hidden enemies. To meet this criticism I devised a test that postulated a series of unexpected defensive encounters rather than a cavalry charge.

I hope that aspiring course designers study this system, which is much truer to the principle of realism, obviates those



ludicrous multiple-magazine harnesses — and incidentally gives revolvers an equal shake. I have never been one to make allowances for wheelguns, but common sense tells us that we don't don a week's supply of ammunition every time we wear a pistol. A revolver may be a less-than-optimum defensive device, but we should not devise tests that rule it completely out by reason of their own impracticality.

The foregoing stages were scored so as to carry the same weight — 120 possible points. They could not be balanced exactly without loss of diversity and realism, but that was not an important matter as long as they remained *qualification stages*, on which one *qualified* for the main event. If the main event is deemed to be only a sixth and equal stage, the entire concept of the match is vitiated, a point not clear to some.

Shootoff

Therefore the Shootoff — the main event — was the heart of the affair.

The Lafayette Gun Club — host organization for the 1980 Nationals — deserves all praise for the outstanding layout of the shootoff. "Pepper Poppers," the invention of John Pepper of Maryland, were the main targets, followed by pressure-release electric knock-down plates, and the whole arrangement worked like a charm.

I prescribed an extension of the venerable Flying-M which, since its invention by Combat Master John Plaen, has stood as the best of the man-against-man confrontations. Because we could use the Pepper Poppers, which fall with one good hit, more targets than normal could be used. Two were placed at seven meters ("Where it's at, Baby!"), one at 15 and one at 25.

For those who came in late, a Flying-M requires you to launch off the start line at 90 degrees from your direction of fire, tip a wicket three-paces distant with your shooting hand, draw and engage a series of targets, reload, and hit a clock-stopper before your opponent can. It turns a marksmanship contest into a spectator sport, which is true of no other shooting discipline — and match directors ignore that at risk to the entire program.

This, the championship event, showed us the finest pistol shooting heretofore demonstrated in the history of pistol shooting. The great stars — Seyfried, Fowler, Campbell, Planx, Pruitt — were battling it out at six seconds and under, which is about like running the hundred-yard dash in 8.5, or running for 2,000 yards in one football season.

For the first time we saw the "split hammer," in which two divergent targets are hit as quickly as the slide can return to battery — and we saw this not just once but often. It seemed as if Tom Campbell, shooting a 9mm which barely sufficed to tip over a target, was stopping the clock with his fifth shot — *after reloading* — almost before his first target hit the ground! I asked him how he could shift targets with that blinding speed without knowing whether he had hit or not.

His answer: "You gotta have faith!"

It is not for me, who designed the course, to pass judgment on it. I here set forth only the "reasons why." It is for others to do better in the future, for constant improvement is built into practical shooting — as long as principle is observed.

I doubt if I can do much better, so it is a pleasure to quote the opinion of the man whose international record distinguishes him as the leading candidate for the title of the world's best pistol shot: "On some reflection the test of skill was at a level truly higher than last year's world meet, and will probably stand so for some time to come."

COURSE OF FIRE U.S. NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 1980

STAGE I
BASICS

a. 5 meters, 2 shots in 1½ seconds, 3 strings total six. Start hands shoulder high. 6

b. 10 meters, 2 shots in 2 seconds, 3 strings total six. Start hands down. 6

(new target)

c. 15 meters, 2 shots in 2½ seconds, 2 strings total four. Start hands clasped 4

d. 30 meters, 2 shots in 3 seconds, 2 strings total four. Start hands clear. 4

e. 60 meters, 2 shots in 6 seconds, 2 strings total four. Start hands clear. 4

Possible Score: 120 points

Late shots lose one hit of maximum value.

STAGE II
SPEED

Three targets at 5 meters, diverging 90° each (180° total). Head *only* to count, scored 5/2, 5/1.

Shooter faces whichever target he chooses, hands shoulder high. On signal he fires once at each target.

Three shots per string. Eight strings. Total 24 shots. Possible score 120 points.

Late shots lose one hit of maximum value.

STAGE III
SCRAMBLE

Twelve targets in four sets, engaged from four firing stations. Twenty-four hits to count, for 120 possible points.

The shooter begins at the first station, which is a stepped wall on the left of the firing line, standing erect with both hands on the wall.

On signal he engages two targets placed seven meters beyond the wall. He shoots over the wall, not around it.

Without further signal he moves to the right, enters the tunnel, engages three targets placed at 5, 10 and 15 meters from the first firing port, proceeds to the second firing port, engages three more targets placed at 5, 10 and 15 meters, then exits the tunnel and proceeds to the third firing station.

From the third firing station, which is a low window, he engages two more targets placed at 12 meters, proceeds to the fourth firing station (unrestricted) and engages two moving targets (running left to right) which have commenced to move 30 seconds after the start signal.

Procedural Restrictions:

a. During movement, the pistol must be kept pointed downrange and the trigger finger must be kept outside the trigger guard.
b. If either of the moving targets is untouched, 10 points will be deducted from the total score for each such target.

STAGE IV
REACHING

Nine targets in three sets of three, engaged from three firing points, left to right.

Shooter starts three paces to the rear of the barrier at the first firing station. On signal he proceeds to the barrier and engages three targets, proceeds to the second firing station and engages three targets, proceeds to the third firing station and engages three targets.

The shooter is timed from the start signal until he indicates that he has finished by raising his pistol straight over his head. Two hits only to count on any one target. Any target untouched is a 20-point penalty.

After penalties, score will be divided by time. Best score of the match will be factored to 120 points, and others adjusted by the same factor.

The shooter may load while in motion but the muzzle must be kept downrange and fingers outside the trigger guard.

STAGE V
SEQUENTIAL DEFENSE

This is a "Jungle Lane" set with 12 "Pepper Popper" reactive targets.

On signal, the shooter moves from the start line to the first firing station, as marked on the ground. He may not draw until one foot is down inside the marked border of the firing station. Once on station he engages all targets visible until all are knocked down and immediately proceeds forward until one foot is on the ground beyond the marked border of the firing station, at which time his time is taken.

On signal from the range officer, he then proceeds to the start line for the next firing station and waits for the second starting signal, whereupon he engages as before.

Total time for all firing stations is the shooter's score, low time to win.

If the shooter steps beyond the forward limit of the shooting station but leaves a target standing within it he may not move back into the station and re-engage. If this occurs the shooter shall incur a penalty of five seconds for each target left standing.

SHOOTOFF

The Shootoff will be an extension of the John Plaen Flying-M, with the top 16 qualifiers placed alternatively on a double elimination J-Ladder. Winners will earn up to 120 points to be added to qualification scores.

LANGLI
SA

ABOUT a dozen of us huddled over picnic tables in various states of numbness, silently cursing the Missouri cold. Somebody muttered something about a brass monkey and remarked on the difficulty of teaching a class on defensive shooting in such weather. But as the session began, our minds were diverted by the first in a series of informative discussions on personal safety.

The fact that we live in an unpredictable, increasingly violent world has heightened our need to become experts in personal safety and to face physical threats by striking a balance between paranoia and naivete. That balance is called "preparation." Personal Safety, Inc. (PSI), of Columbia, Mo., is an organization designed to help prepare people physically and — more importantly — mentally to defend themselves.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Moats returned to Columbia, Mo., last winter for Andy Langley's course after an earlier visit to the city when he was a competitor in the three-gun match at SOF's first convention held in September.

A longtime IPSC shooter, Moats gave SOF readers an easy, practical solution for blocking grip safeties in our August '80 issue.

In the Marine Corps, Moats served as range officer and handgun instructor for his battalion. His practical experience as teacher and shooter makes his endorsement of Langley's techniques high praise indeed. —M.L. Jones

Andy Langley is head of Personal Safety, Inc.; part-time assistant instructors include Ken Hackathorn and John Farnam. Langley's program is a four-day course in the tactical use of handguns, rifles and shotguns. About half the time is spent on range-shooting, the other half in discussing the "whats, whys and hows" of defensive shooting. Langley makes students think as much as he makes them shoot.

"When you're under pressure, if you have a mental sequence of events to follow, it's easier to have confidence," Langley says. "Only with confidence can you be alert, decisive and aggressive; therefore, I look at everything in sequences."

Andy Langley has earned the right to speak dogmatically about performing under pressure. As a United States Marine,

EY PERSONAL FETY COURSE

An Ounce of Preparation Is Worth A Pound Of Lead

Text & Photos by Greg Moats

Personal Safety, Inc. chief Andy Langley (standing) observes tactics of student using handgun while defending himself in driver's seat of vehicle.

he spent an 18-month tour in Vietnam as personal bodyguard for U.S. Ambassadors Ellsworth Bunker and Graham Martin. After leaving the Marines, he served as an instructor for the Rhodesian Special Air Services, then ran security for a 750,000-acre Rhodesian ranch before joining the Selous Scouts. Langley also shot on the winning Rhodesian practical-shooting team in 1977 and 1979.

His lecture began with an analysis of his "PARRR" cycle of personal safety (Preparation, Anticipation, Recognition, Reaction, Reorganization). According to Langley, personal safety starts with preparation. This phase begins when an individual decides to buy a firearm, ammunition and other equipment (such as a flashlight or a spare gas can for his auto) and learns how to use them. Only after one has learned his limitations with each piece of equipment, can he or she competently enter the second phase.

Anticipation, or sensitivity to what *could* happen, comes when one's mental awareness is attuned to the alternatives of personal choice, should an emergency occur. Hopefully, one will be able to remain in this phase for the rest of his life.

If, however, a possibly hostile situation arises, a person is thrust into the third phase of recognition or information gathering. Here, he must be alert both to subtly and obviously out-of-place details. He must avoid chaos and maintain self-control. If this information gathering proves to be conclusively negative, the prepared person then proceeds into the fourth or reaction phase, where the decision-making process takes place.

The major considerations in decision-making are:

1. Is the threatening aggressor armed or unarmed?
2. What threat does he or she pose to me?
3. Based on the answers to No. 1 and No. 2, do I shoot or not?
4. What are the light conditions?
5. What is the distance to the target?
6. What is the size of the target?

Nos. 4 to 6 determine shooting position, whether to aim or point and whether to squeeze the trigger or press it quickly.

Once one progresses through the reaction phase, he must then reorganize. This includes reloading the weapon, movement to some form of cover and possibly giving medical assistance and, in civilian encounters, will include calling the appropriate authorities such as the police — or for an ambulance. Reorganization is also the

point of transfer back to the anticipation phase.

Preparation, Anticipation, Recognition, Reaction and Reorganization show the crisp, lucid, logical approach that Langley brings to his classes.

Our class was divided into two groups: new shooters and those with shooting experience. Langley gave the former instructions on grip, stance, sight alignment, trigger squeeze and the draw, while the rest of us followed John Farnam for an enjoyably frustrating tour of his Duelatron course.

"Always watch the suspect's hands," Farnam said as he electronically turned a target to reveal an aggressor where an innocent bystander had previously stood. The target looked exactly like it had a fraction of a second before — with one critical difference: The figure now held a handgun which was shadowed by a bag of groceries.

Use That Cover

"The skillful use of cover has saved more lives than good shooting skills ever will," Farnam explained as he began a short lecture and demonstration on the subject.

"Who's going to be first?" Farnam looked over our suddenly reticent group. I looked down quickly to avoid eye contact that might make me a volunteer as the first embarrassee. Fortunately, a police officer stepped forward.

"Your baby daughter has been kidnapped," Farnam said as he pointed to a bundled-up blanket lying 30 yards away. "Your job is to get her back. You can talk to any of the targets, but remember, you're in a residential area, so don't accidently shoot your next-door neighbor."

As the first student low-crawled halfway to a fallen log (the only cover between us and the kidnapped child), a target turned to reveal a hostile grocery shopper. Two quick shots from the police officer's 2½-inch S&W Model 66 dispatched the aggressor. Almost immediately, a second hostile target 50 yards away across an open meadow pivoted to face the prone defender. When the student hit it with one shot, he looked back and gave us an "I-shoot-like-that-all-the-time" smile. Upon reaching the fallen log, he reloaded his revolver, got to his feet and dashed toward the bundled blanket.

Suddenly, to his left in the woods, two targets turned, revealing an aggressor with a handgun at seven yards and another with a shotgun at 15 yards. The student hesitated for a second, trying to determine which of the "bad guys" constituted the greater threat. He engaged the closer target before emptying his handgun at the second. As he dropped to the prone position and groped for a speedloader, a third hostile target appeared 15 yards away at the meadow's edge. The student hit the target with his second shot and immediately shifted his attention to the last visible target — an innocent bystander, a lady reaching into her purse.

Realizing that at any second the target could be flipped to reveal an aggressor, the student kept his attention and handgun directed at the potential threat. He gingerly worked his way over to the blanket, picked it up and, without shifting his eyes away from that last target, backpedaled to the starting position.

"That's all there is to it," Farnam said with a grin. Since each target had an innocent bystander on one side and a "bad guy" on the other, the scenario — and results — differed for each of us course-crawlers.

The second day began with a summary of the first day's accomplishments. It became obvious that sequential thinking combined with preanticipated tactics was the crux of the course.

"The purpose of our training is to give you the time *not* to shoot," Langley said. (I had to think about that for a while.) "When you jump from a condition of unpreparedness to the reaction phase, you'll probably make a tragic mistake."

Langley is outspoken about discretion being the better part of valor. His training is designed to prepare a person mentally to keep his wits from being clouded by emotion (fear and anger) and to enable him to make a judicial decision. His second discussion covered the discrepancy between real and psychological time.

Keep Cool

"The value of competitive shooting is that it helps the participants learn to get emotion out of the way," he said. Our range-firing for that part of the day was dedicated to running some man-against-man competitive events to show us the importance of the emotional factor. In the afternoon we learned the functioning cycle and how to clear stoppages, and spent some range time on immediate-action drills and mastering the subtleties of "point" shooting.

" 'Instinct' shooting is a misnomer," Langley said. "Man is not born with the inherent 'instinct' to use machinery; therefore, he must be taught." And teach us he did.

If the first two days were intriguing, the third was fascinating.

When we entered the classroom, we saw, hanging behind the picnic table that doubled as a lectern, a life-sized skeletal drawing, complete with various-colored plastic overlays that shadowed certain regions of the body. Langley brought in a doctor who specializes in emergency-room procedures to lecture us on terminal ballistics.

The skeletal drawing was, in fact, the blueprint for a new, anatomically correct target that Langley and his doctor (who asked to remain anonymous) are developing for possible use in police and military training and practical-shooting competition. How many doctors can intelligently

discuss the controversy between the kinetic-energy theory and the Hatcher theory of relative stopping power? During the lecture someone asked about the Thompson-LaGarde tests.

"The Thompson-LaGarde tests were neither scientific nor well-done," the doctor stated. As a Hatcher advocate, I thought he was kicking a sacred cow. However, he went on to explain that their conclusion generally coincides with reality. Both Langley and the doctor have proceeded empirically, without conjecture or postulates, but with a "this-is-what-happens" approach.

Third Eye

In the early afternoon, Langley discussed tactics and introduced his "three-eye" approach of looking from behind a covered position. The shooter who uses this technique looks around corners with the handgun raised to eye level, so he can search a potentially dangerous area using his sights as a third eye. Class members ran through a couple of defensive scenarios.

After a short break, we began shotgun training. Three cardboard targets were set up. The first was hit with a rifled slug, the second with birdshot and the third with No. 4 Buck to demonstrate the results of various types of shotgun ammunition.

Langley broke the firing sequence into four steps: (1) Lean slightly forward and push the weapon away from the body with the muzzle in the target's general direction. (2) Bring the gun up to eye level while disengaging the safety. (3) Pull the shotgun's butt solidly into the shoulder and pull the trigger immediately upon contact. (4) Practice.

The class lined up and ran through a series of dry-firing exercises with the four steps executed first sequentially and then individually. Live-fire consisted of shouldering the gun and shooting one round at a metal plate located 10 yards downrange. This process was repeated until all students could hit the plate in less than one second. In order to give you a comparison, one student took 1.5 seconds to draw and shoot the plate with his handgun; it took him .4 seconds to go from "port arms" and shoot the plate with his riotgun.

TOP: Classroom sessions at Personal Safety, Inc. are challenging yet enjoyable. MIDDLE: Andy Langley shows PSI students how to use automobile for cover. BOTTOM: Langley demonstrates proper stance for use of combat shotgun. He holds Remington Mod. 870 with eight-shot magazine extension. Student in center holds 870 without extension and man at right has Remington Mod. 1100.

The afternoon shotgun session ended with demonstrations of and practice at speedloading, shooting from behind a barricade and weak-shoulder shooting.

Vehicle Defense

The final day found us huddled around a jeep rather than the picnic table. Langley began to discuss how to prepare a vehicle for safety and how to survive a fire fight in it. He considered practical matters, including getting a CB radio, keeping a full, impact-retardant gas can in the trunk, having a spotlight that plugs into the cigarette lighter, having a flashlight and fire extinguisher and, of course, a first-aid kit available. He showed the car's tactical use, and we practiced entering, shooting from within, exiting and shooting from behind the vehicle with both hand- and riotguns.

That afternoon showed us our limits with the defensive rifle. Snapshooting at 50 yards and point shooting at close range were emphasized, again using Langley's sequential approach to shooting.

Class members' shooting ability and tactical awareness built to a crescendo which culminated on the final evening with a night shoot, a finale which tested students' ability to think tactically, respond quickly and solve some challenging marksmanship problems.

If this outline makes the training seem intense — it is, and a lot of ground is covered quickly. However, the key to training is not so much a matter of time as procedure. The goal of all training is to alter a person's knowledge, skills and attitudes — or combinations thereof. Personal Safety, Inc. accomplishes its purpose successfully because of its procedures. One class participant who had never fired a handgun was, by the end of the third day, hitting the "A" zone of an IPSC Item target with regularity.

Survival Oriented

The Personal Safety Course is geared toward survival through defensive shooting; it is not designed for the competitive shooter who wants to learn how to accumulate trophies. Although designed for all who are interested in defending themselves, it is especially suitable for two groups:

(1) Those involved with training units, including police, SWAT teams and weapons instructors whose responsibilities require them to train others to defend themselves.

(2) Competitive shooters (like myself) who consider themselves savvy when it comes to gunhandling, but are not trained in personal defensive tactics.

The Personal Safety Course is time well-spent. For information contact: Personal Safety, Inc., Dept. SOF, 609 E. Broadway, Columbia, MO 65205. Phone (314) 696-3616.

DEATH-DEALING PROJECT DELTA

Part 1: Exclusive Look At Special Forces Classified Operation

by Jim Morris

YOU could tell they were good, just by looking at them. Doc Betterton — Staff Sgt. Dale C. Betterton, of Providence, R.I., a tall, slender man with glasses and a quiet manner — oozed confidence.

"Okay," he said, standing on the platform in the briefing room at the Project Delta Forward Operational Base at Phu Bai. "We'll go in here" — he tapped the map with his pointer — "and check out these areas. Primary mission is to check out enemy installations and personnel."

Taking all this in were five other team members — Betterton was the senior adviser. The other two Americans, Sgt. 1st Class Alberto Ortiz, Jr., a new man on the Project, and Sgt. John D. Anthony, watched the briefing. The Vietnamese contingent consisted of 1st Lt. Ton That Hai, patrol leader, and Sgts. Nguyen Van Khan and Hoang Van Lieu.

They all listened with the same air of intense calm. They had, as the saying goes, their stuff in order.

After listening to the briefback in English, Lt. Hai repeated the information in Vietnamese.

In the rear of the room, Maj. Charles A. Allen, Fayetteville, N.C., a massive man, leaned forward in his chair, one hand propped on his knee and the other under his chin. He did not appear to listen so much as to absorb the information, evaluating and storing it in a corner of his mind which constantly tracked and controlled every detail of the Project.

Beside him, his counterpart, Maj. Phan Van Huan, leaned back, his manner detached.

As the chopper skimmed over the treetops, the sun was being extinguished by the mountains, throwing long shadows across the streambeds and valleys below.

"What is this now?" Doc thought. "Seventeen, maybe 18 times in a year and a half. Every time, I'm still scared. That's good! A scared man is a careful man, and a careful man will live a long time. If I'm ever not afraid I'll go into some other line of work."

Sitting in the left door of the helicopter, he followed the hills and valleys on his map. The wind whipped his tiger-striped trouser legs and floppy hat, which hung down his back on a homemade cord of parachute suspension line. A CAR-15 was slung over his shoulder by a triangular olive-drab bandage which he would convert to a neckerchief when they reached the ground.

The seemingly endless maze of pockets on his tiger suit were jammed with notebooks, signaling devices, cigarettes, matches and maps, all neatly folded into plastic bags. In his patrol harness were more signaling devices, a camera and the ammunition he hoped he wouldn't have to use. On his back was a portable home — a groundsheet, 14 days' chow (long-range reconnaissance patrol rations, or LRRPs) and some miscellaneous fruit cans.

The others were similarly attired, except for the two radios: one held by the Americans and one by the Vietnamese. Each was on a different frequency — in order to send the same data simultaneously.

Five minutes from the infiltration point, Doc's old friends, the butterflies, began zipping around in his stomach again. "All right," he thought. "You butterflies get in line, column of twos! Shape up there!"

The ship started down, and he looked below into the dark space in the trees that was their landing zone. The chopper eased in and he was grateful again for the 281st Aviation Company. "Man, these people can fly," he thought.

Trees rising on all sides, rotor blades snipping leaves around the edges, the chopper inched its way down into the hole. Master Sgt. Norman Doney, the reconnaissance section leader, who would stay with the helicopter, rolled two ladders out the door. Doc swung over the side.

VC prisoners from early days of Delta.

He swung his feet straight out, as he should, being the bottom man on the rope ladder. The heavy gear dragged him toward the ground and Doc started working his way down, all his weight on his arms. Finally, his feet were below the ladder and he hung by the bottom rung, eight feet above a bomb crater. He let go. Ortiz dropped beside him from the other ladder and they skipped sideways to get out of each other's way.

At a dead run, they headed for the encircling jungle and, 50 meters into it, stopped. Doc gulped air down fast to silence his panting.

Behind them the chopper sped away. The team lay listening under the brush and palms, fingers digging into wet leaves and dirt while the dampness slowly permeated their fatigues.

When Betterton gave the signal to rise, they slowly crouched and stepped off single file into the jungle, walking with their toes touching the ground first.

They made no more noise than wind sighing in the treetops. Tiger suits and camouflage greasepaint blended them into the surroundings. If one of them sat perfectly still in full view beside the trail, a man might walk by in broad daylight and never notice him.

They moved forward about 50 meters, stopped, listened, and moved on again. Using the last dregs of daylight, the team scanned for a thicket. Spotting a likely place, they glided back on their trail and sank to the earth in firing positions. No one came, so they crept into the thicket and slid out of their packs.

Turning on the radio, Betterton whispered, "Voyager, this is Lobo, over."

In the handset a voice crackled back, "This is Voyager, go."

Doc gave their positions in the same hoarse whisper and reported no contacts

or sightings, while Hai did the same in Vietnamese. Then they wrapped up in their plastic groundsheets and fell asleep, each man touching at least one other. They still wore their pistol belts and harnesses. If they had to run they could manage without their packs, but not without the water, ammo and other gear on the harnesses.

With a rock gouging his shoulderblade and his hips digging into the ground, Doc slept fitfully. At 0330, the growl of heavy equipment and trucks snatched him from sleep. The enemy was building a road! Doc scribbled in his notebook.

At 0430, the patrol was up and creeping through the underbrush. Avoiding ridgelines and streambeds, they moved through the jungle on the slopes. Frequently they heard padding footsteps on the trails above, or the tonal undulations of Vietnamese conversation in the creeks below. There was no attempt at concealment on the enemy's part; he owned the territory and felt no need to hide from anything but air. Again Doc scribbled, and spoke into the handset.

In the TOC (Tactical Operations Center) bunker, Maj. Allen and Capt. Bill Larabee sat side by side at a big desk, plotting reports from all the recon teams in the field. At a similar desk 10 feet away, Maj. Huan and Capt. Ton That Luan did the same.

Across from them, Capt. Richard Dundee issued intelligence reports and summaries to major U.S. commands, while Lt. Truong Hoang Phi cranked out the same information to the Vietnamese Special Forces High Command.

No one on the patrol spoke a word except into the handset; they had worked so long together that no words were necessary. On the third day, Hai gestured toward the trail above and made a grabbing motion with his hands. Doc, knowing he meant to try to capture a prisoner, nodded and they crept toward the path to wait.

When someone finally came it was three North Vietnamese army regulars, all armed with AK-47 assault rifles. The recon team opened fire from five meters and dashed over the ridge and down the other side. When Anthony almost walked headlong into another NVA soldier the next day and barely beat him to the trigger, they decided it was time to pull out. Betterton and Hai looked for LZs on their maps.

Allen saw it first. From his command-and-control ship, flying high over the operational area, he picked out the bright blue-white flash of a signaling mirror and spoke into his radio. Gunships, easy to spot by their red tail markings, assumed a clockwise orbit over the LZ, firing either at targets of opportunity or just keeping Charlie's head down. The air was filled with the whoooosh-CRACK of rockets and the gruff belch of mini-guns.

Flying above, hearing the conversation between his ship, the gunships, the TOC and the recon team on the ground, Allen could see it all like some monstrous game laid out by Parker Bros. At his command, the first recovery ship hopped over a ridgeline and jockeyed down into the hole.

Doc Betterton put the mirror back into his ammo pouch. The others fanned out in firing positions around him. The incoming recovery ship hovered a hundred feet over them in the trees. Although Doc couldn't see Doney in the ship, he knew who it was.

Three sandbags dragged the heavy, six-foot looped straps of the McGuire rig down through the trees. Doc waved Ortiz and the two Vietnamese sergeants in, and they grabbed the straps which were whipping in the wake of rotor. Each of them sat in one loop and hooked his right wrist in a strap that slid down tight to prevent falling, even if wounded, on the way out.

The chopper struggled to go straight up without dragging the men through the trees. This was the period of maximum danger — maximum exposure of the helicopter and maximum exposure for the men. They cleared the trees and were gone.

The next ship edged into position and the straps came down again. Doc, the heaviest of the three, jumped into the middle seat as the others settled next to him. The chopper eased upward and they rose through the trees, branches slapping at their faces and hands.

Then they were clear of the treetops and the ropes streamed to the rear as the chopper surged forward, heading for a safe spot to land and take the men inside. No matter how many times he did it, Doc never got completely used to whipping through the air at a thousand feet, at the end of a rope.

PROJECT Delta, Special Forces Detachement B-52, one of the most highly decorated units of its size in the Vietnam War, was organized in early 1965 under the code name "Leapin' Lena." Its first commander was Capt. William R. Richardson. Under the original concept, there were no Americans on the recon teams, and the earliest infiltrations were night static-line and HALO jumps.

The concept of using only indigenous troops proved unworkable, due to operational procedures adopted by the teams, odd customs such as sleeping on the trail where Charlie could find them and the fanciful nature of some of their reports. It

was only six months before American "advisers" started accompanying the patrols.

There were many refinements of Project Delta's operational techniques through the six years of its existence, but the project achieved its highest degree of perfection — and Delta was as close to perfection as anything ever was — under Maj. (later Lt. Col.) Chuck Allen, who was with the Project for two years and commanded it for six months. He is the man Gen. William C. Westmoreland called "Big 'Un."

SF—Bright, Dedicated, Ballsy

For a time, MACV headquarters insisted that recon teams be commanded by officers, because they did not trust the quality of information they received from enlisted swine. This was an erroneous notion because, for one thing, Special Forces, at least at that time, was one of the few military organizations in history whose enlisted men had, on the average, higher IQs than their officers. And those young lieutenants were a whole lot more flighty than a seasoned SF NCO — which is not to say that the officers were dumb. SF was simply an organization of very bright, dedicated and ballsy individuals.

In fact, mental requirements for Special Forces were exactly the same as those for OCS. The only differences in the prerequisites were that you had to be able to swim to get into the Forces and you couldn't have a criminal record and get into OCS.

Of those officer recon-team leaders, incidentally, one of the few to work out was Bill Larabee, now a lieutenant colonel in the Pentagon, late of the XVIII Airborne Corps G-3 shop, and, as a young captain, Chuck Allen's operations officer.

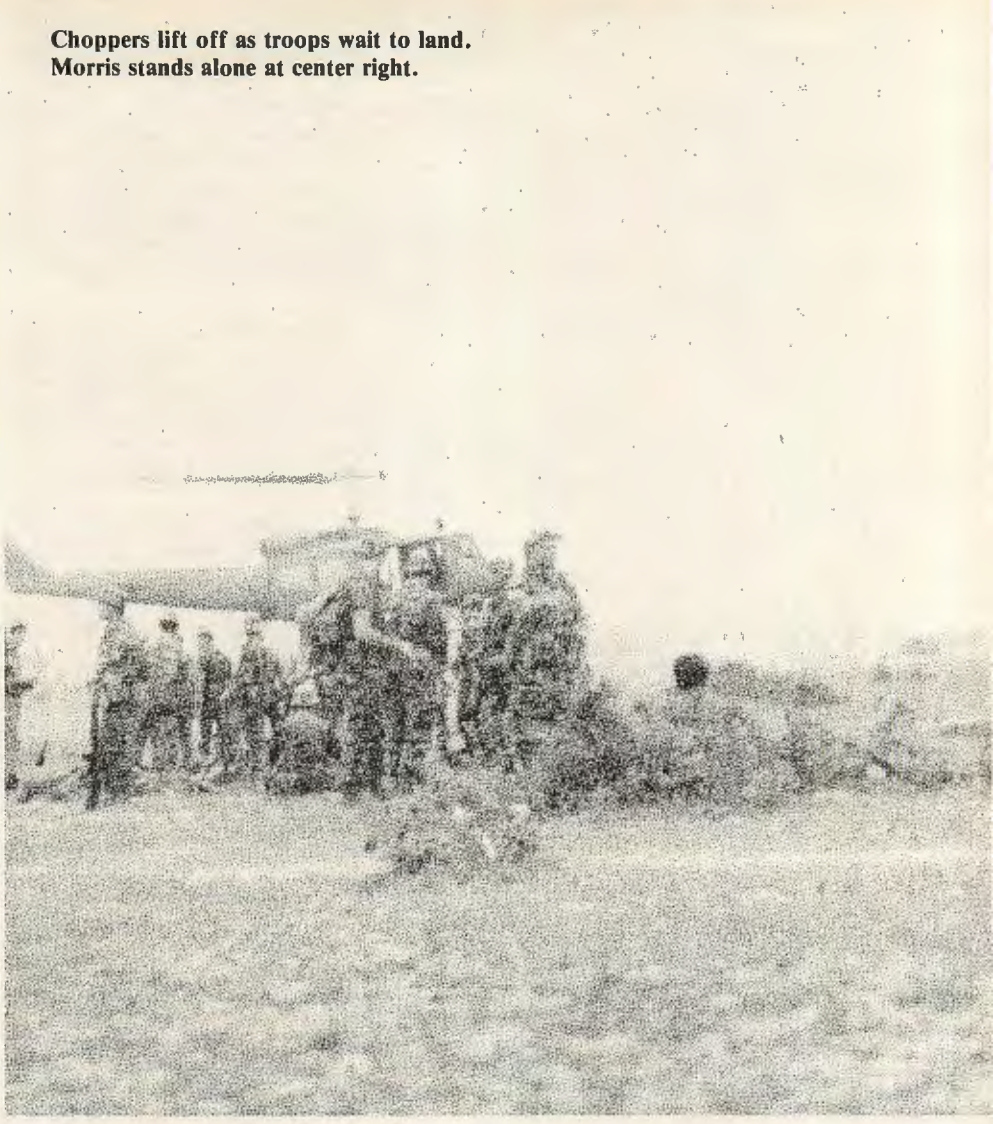
Another change, under Col. Francis J. "Splash" Kelley, was the formation of Projects Sigma and Omega. There are various versions of how that came about. Chuck Allen says that Kelley wanted to use Delta in I Corps and formed Omega for II Corps and Sigma for III Corps. And, as it turned out, that is how they were generally deployed.

But what one of my old sergeant buddies told me, when I started checking into it, was that early in his tour Kelley was invited down to the Project for dinner. It was a spirited evening; the gentlemen of the Project were well known for their iron discipline and control in the field, and their lack of those qualities in garrison.

As rumor has it, during the course of the evening a master sergeant gave the new colonel a fat, wet kiss on the ear and murmured to him, "Don't ever die, you sweet motherfucker. Don't you even catch cold." According to the rumor, Kelley organized his new projects the next day.

It would be easy enough to call Col. Kelley in Denver and check to see if that

Choppers lift off as troops wait to land. Morris stands alone at center right.



version is true. But he wouldn't admit it if it were, and then we'd have to take that incident out of this story. Rumor control is no longer an issue. This is folklore.

Under Allen, and thereafter, the core of the Project consisted of the recon section, with 12 teams of 10 members each, usually four Americans and six Vietnamese Special Forces men, usually only six of whom were deployed at a time. The headquarters was SF Det B-52. Nominally, the Project was commanded by a Viet lieutenant colonel and Allen was his adviser. The reaction force was the Vietnamese 91st Airborne Ranger Battalion, an organization which had its good points and its not-so-good points. That was why there was also a platoon of Nungs (a Chinese tribe with a mercenary heritage) for bomb-damage assessment. The Nungs, you see, were trained, fed, paid and led by Americans.

There was also a section of all-Vietnamese teams, known as Roadrunners, which ran the trails in VC and NVA uniforms.

Normally, the 281st Assault Helicopter Company was assigned in direct support. This was an extraordinary unit. Alert crews slept on the ships, ready to go pull a team out at a moment's notice. The gunships took off so heavily loaded they had to skip twice to get airborne, and the slicks could inch down into a hole in which you'd swear a starling couldn't land.

There was also an Air Force FAC (Forward Air Control) team assigned, normally commanded by a USAF lieutenant colonel, and on one occasion there was a Marine Corps fighter wing assigned opcon to the Project, commanded by a major general. Probably the only instance in history of an Army major being in command of a Marine Corps major general.

Project Delta was special. This was the organization of which Gen. Robert Cushman, later Commandant of the Marine Corps, said, "These men come from the ether zone of military excellence."

It was about the time of the Tet Offensive that I started hanging around with the officers from Project Delta. Chuck Allen

had been down there all the time I was in-country, but he was in an important command position, and as PIO (Public Information Officer) I was kind of embarrassed to go down there and hang around with all those real soldiers when I was flying my desk up in headquarters. But sometime during Tet when I had to go there on business, Allen or somebody asked me back socially and I started going to their club every now and again.

So when Lang Vei was overrun, and Chuck Allen called and told me Project Delta was going to jump in and take the place back, I grabbed my field gear and a volunteer photographer and away we went.

When we got to Da Nang, which was to have been the staging area for the jump, we found the NVA had withdrawn and the survivors were being brought in by chopper. It had been a hell of a fight, the NVA using tanks for the first time in the war, and they had overrun the place finally with just a few Americans and Viets holding them off from the command bunker (See "Armor in the Wire!" SOF, November '79).

I Corps was run by the Marines at that time, and I got to a Marine PIO colonel and suggested that we hold a press conference for those Lang Vei survivors who wanted to appear. Four of them came over to the press camp and were interviewed by all three TV networks and the wire services and news magazines. I wasn't too happy about their being scrubbed and put into baggy fatigues with the supply room smell still on them. I'd have been happier to have them in tiger suits and bandages.

There was no question about it. We had the shit kicked out of us at Lang Vei, but those guys were so cool at their press conference, and it was obvious they had fought so bravely when badly outnumbered, that I like to think we turned our military defeat into a psychological victory. Our own little Tet Offensive within a Tet Offensive.

After the press conference, the guys from Lang Vei were whisked back to the SF headquarters in Da Nang and my sergeant photographer and I got good and drunk with the correspondents. It was a good time. Somebody played the guitar and I croaked out the Viet Cong Blues and the Jungle Rot Blues in my wretched baritone. Other songs were sung and some jokes were told and we all agreed that nobody in any position of authority knew what the hell was coming off.

My good sergeant got a great deal drunker than I did, since all he was doing was getting drunk, while I was cleverly cementing relations with my journalistic colleagues. As we drove away from the Marine compound, way after the curfew, he fired a two-round burst from his M16, which I then took away from him and, not seeing anybody around, drove off.

It seems, though, that the sergeant of the guard ran up to the gate and, apparently, my good sergeant shot him the bird. Col. Ladd got a somewhat exaggerated account of the incident, through channels, which he then asked me to explain. My reply was about the best creative writing I have ever done.

With Delta In The Field

I had established a precedent for hanging out with Project Delta, so when they set up an FOB (Forward Operating Base) at Phu Bai to run a recon of the valley about five kilometers from A Shau, I went down there to cover it for *Green Beret* Magazine.

If Delta lived plush in garrison, they lived spartan in the field. They had a number of squad tents set up, a chopper pad beside their headquarters bunker, a defensive perimeter with some wire and that was it.

I sat around up there for a couple of days waiting for an operation I could go out on. Allen wouldn't let me go out with a recon team, which was probably a good

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jim Morris tells a good war story, as Part 1 of his three-part article on the Delta Project shows — and *War Story* is the title of his book about his three tours in Vietnam with the U.S. Army Special Forces. (*War Story* is published by Paladin Press, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306. The book costs $14.95.)

After receiving a disability retirement from the Army, Morris attended the University of Oklahoma's graduate program in professional writing. He is now a graduate student at a midwestern university. He holds the Bronze Star with three oak-leaf clusters, two for valor; the Purple Heart with three oak-leaf clusters; the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, with Bronze Star; the Combat Infantryman's Badge; and the Master Parachutist Badge.

Morris's SOF articles include "The Straphangers War" (February '79) and "Dumbo Drop" (March '80). SOF plans to publish his three-part interview with Mike Force Company Commander Larry Dring — a saga that tells some of the best war stories I've ever read — after the publication of "Death-Dealing Project Delta."

—M.L. Jones

idea. I wasn't in as good shape as his recon people were and I wasn't trained for that kind of work, at least not to Delta's specifications. I had run recons before, of course, but their recon projects had their own tricks of the trade and, although I knew about most of them, that knowledge was not the same as experience.

But they had brought a couple of companies of the Nha Trang Mike Force with them, and they put these guys in for five days. I went with them.

Delta's choppers had knocked out a bunch of Russian trucks running through the A Shau Valley and Allen wanted pictures of them. His intelligence officer, Capt. Richard Dundee, and I went in with one of the Mike Force companies. We made a couple of contacts, got shot up fairly well, got a few pictures of the trucks, got chased, set fire to a bunch of NVA ammo caches and finally lost our pursuers when they got in a fire fight with their own exploding ammunition. Dundee's shots didn't develop and Delta commandeered the ones I'd gotten for my magazine.

Out On An Extraction

Then we walked down two kilometers of road from the trucks to our LZ. We looked like a company coming from a training exercise, walking in a column of twos right down that road, and I could hear NVA talking to each other in the trees on either side of the road. They didn't bother us though. I guess they thought we were NVA,too.

Two weeks before, the 91st Rangers had been in there. An NVA trooper had stepped out of the woods and inquired, in Vietnamese, "What outfit are you guys with?"

"You'll have to ask the lieutenant," was the reply, and the ARVN trooper pointed to his CO.

"What outfit are you with?" he asked the lieutenant.

"91st Airborne Ranger Battalion," replied the lieutenant to the NVA, whose eyes widened as he realized his mistake. The lieutenant stitched him up the middle with an M16. A neat gesture, but counterproductive when you consider their primary mission was to capture a prisoner.

The next day Allen was going out on a team extraction and I asked to go along. He said sure.

It was interesting to go with him. He had the business of aerial reconnaissance down to a science. He and Larabee and their two Vietnamese counterparts sat in the door — the Viets on one side, Larabee and Allen on the other. Larabee and Allen had chopper-pilot's helmets so that they could hook in with their patrol on the ground and all the choppers in the air at the same time. Maj. Huan, the Vietnamese commander, had a similar setup on another frequency with the Viets on the ground. He didn't have contact with the choppers, but his English wasn't too hot anyway.

Larabee and Allen both had their radio call signs lettered in script on the backs of their helmets. It was an amusingconcept, since the signs were supposed to be secret. As a lot of guys with distinguishing characteristics do, they used their nicknames as call signs. Allen's was *Bruiser* and Larabee's was *Joker.*

All the choppers were from the 281st Assault Helicopter Company which, for my money, was the best chopper outfit in 'Nam. They were very proud of their association with the Project, wore camouflage fatigues and put their lives on the line continually. They had a tradition of disregarding any regulation which interfered with the performance of their mission. They were mostly young guys, and almost all of them were warrant officers.

The Marine chopper pilots in I Corps, by way of contrast, went strictly by the book. They were mostly older officers and career people. They also had shitty equipment, while the 281st had the newest and best, so you can't blame the Marines too much. They didn't have much and they had a hard time replacing what they had, so they couldn't afford to abuse it.

The Marines would carry only as much ammunition as they were supposed to. The 281st put so many rockets on their choppers that they would barely lift off. They would lift a little, go forward some and thud against the ground, gaining more momentum from the thud than from the rotors. After two or three repeats of this they would finally limp airborne and gather enough speed to gain altitude.

Not A Normal Human Being

Since Allen, Larabee and the Viets were in the door seats, I had to crouch behind them with my little camera. Larabee sat with his helmet on, cradling a scope-sighted CAR-15. Allen had a new toy, a scope-sighted M60 machine gun hanging from a heavy bungee cord by his seat. I had known Allen for a hell of a long time and had ceased to think of him as what you might call a normal human being. He was more of a natural force, with none of the fears and hungers that distract most of us. Away from battle he was a bit of a sports-car-type dandy, with a huge guffawing laugh. But in combat he was a commander, a computer and a killer. He had a ludicrous number of Air Medals, something like 25, and that murderous M60.

I wanted very badly to listen in on the radio communication, but couldn't.

We lifted off and soon were flying over the jungle. You can see the battlefield from this godlike altitude and follow everything at every turn, with a little plastic-covered map in your lap and a radio in your ear.

But Allen wasn't the kind of commander who rode his subordinates from the air. He used his C-and-C ship as it should have been used. He knew how it was on the ground. He had chased North Korean guerrillas all over behind the lines in the Korean War.

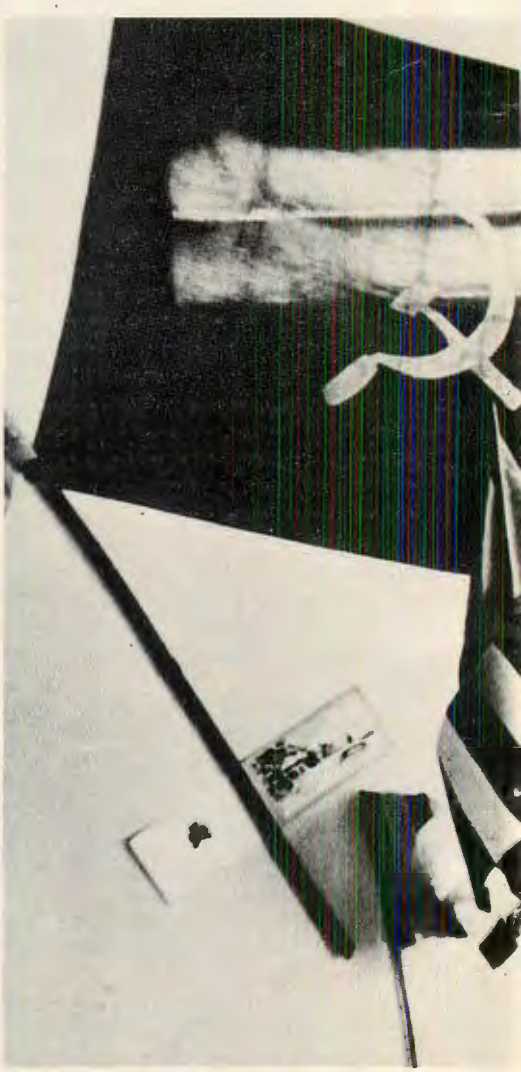
The extraction process was a fascinating thing to watch from the air. We were on top, way over the canopy of jungle, and the entire performance unfolded beneath us like a tableau with little models.

We flew for maybe 20 minutes over the lush, green-mountained jungle, looking down on rivers, rapids and waterfalls. As always, Vietnam was beautiful from the air.

Finally, we picked up the flash of a signaling mirror, a high-intensity dot of light coming out of the green. It wavered as the guy on the ground flashed it at the aircraft. Amazing. Just a small mirror. We were at about 3,500 feet and it was bright as hell.

Down below us, the three gunships

Weapons and flags captured in Nha Trang, Tet '68.



whirled in trail and set up an orbit around the men on the ground. They ran in a tight circle around the patrol, and I saw white puffs of smoke coming off the orbiting choppers as they fired their rockets into the hills surrounding the men on the ground. I couldn't see them, of course, just the nubby green of the trees as the choppers whirled around like toys.

Then the extraction ship started easing down between the orbiting gunships. Down, down, slowly, into the trees. There was no LZ, just jungle. The patrol had been intercepted and had run and kept on running, with one man wounded, maybe dead. They hadn't been going for an LZ — they had just kept running until the choppers got there. The extraction chopper had to lower itself down through the trees as far as it could, then drop a McGuire rig.

You had to use two choppers for a six-man patrol. I rode one once in training and enjoyed it tremendously, but then no one was shooting at me. I imagine it's a great relief to see one come crashing down through the trees.

The first extraction chopper eased down between the gunships and lifted out with two guys in it. This was an all-Viet patrol and had only five men. One was wounded and they had his gear strapped to the extra seat, so they didn't hang

An early Roadrunner, member of all-Vietnamese teams in Project Delta which ran trails in VC and NVA uniforms. He carries Swedish "K" under his shirt and a grenade in the gourd. Roadrunners' modus operandi was to report in to VC unit, wait for meeting of command group, sidle up and waste everybody, then dive into jungle. Program suffered from replacement problems.

hang together. The extraction chopper lifted straight up and climbed for altitude with all the power it had, while the two guys and the gear whirled around underneath. It must have been an uncomfortable ride for them since they couldn't link arms so that they would hang in a clump and not be whirled around under the chopper. They were spinning like tops.

The next chopper settled in the slot and picked up the remaining three guys. They lifted out again. It seemed to take an incredible length of time, and all the while the gunships were circling and firing rockets. Then the choppers lifted and climbed for altitude, and soon we were all scooting for home in formation, the guys in the McGuire rigs streaming out behind at a 45-degree angle, enjoying the breeze.

It took about 10 minutes for us to get away from Indian Country and set down at a firebase of the 101st Airborne Division. The idea was to let the guys in the McGuire rigs get out of them and into the choppers. The McGuire rig, after all, is an emergency measure and something less than comfortable.

As soon as we landed, a couple of gunjeeps from the firebase roared up, the sergeant in charge throwing out his bare belly through his flak jacket and doing an up-front number, swinging his M16 at the end of his arms. There were maybe six or seven troopers with him and they looked gross in their shaggy crewcuts, coated with the red dirt of their bulldozed firebase, white under the goggles which they shoved up on their foreheads when they arrived.

The sergeant in charge got out of his jeep and started to walk around real slow.

Chuck gave him a brief glance, and we jumped back in the choppers and lifted off without a word.

It must have made an interesting story when they got back to the firebase. Three helicopters landed and five Vietnamese in NVA uniforms got out of McGuire rigs and into the choppers. The choppers were manned and flown by Americans in tiger suits carrying .38 revolvers instead of .45 automatics, and then they were gone, and no one had ever heard of anything like that before nor would again.

That night Allen asked me if I wanted to go back into the valley with his reaction force, the 91st Airborne Ranger Battalion, the next day. The idea was to blow up a bunch of the caches and get some further identification on the Russian-made trucks that we'd found the week before. I said sure.

The headquarters usually operated until some time between 10:30 and midnight every day in the field, and then knocked off until seven the next morning, except for the duty officer and NCO. There was a movie outside for the off-duty recon teams and chopper crews, though. If enough of the headquarters people wanted to see it, they showed it again in the briefing room after everybody knocked off work. It meant staying up too late to get enough sleep, but a little diversion was welcome.

"What is this shit?"

They decided to show the movie in the briefing room that night, and I thought it might be a good idea to do something like that before going into the field again. I had seen it before, but it was a good flick — *Up the Down Staircase.* I thought a movie about the trials and tribulations of a high-school teacher might be a welcome relief from all that machine-gun fire.

I sat there enjoying it thoroughly, but after five minutes I started watching Allen instead. As usual, he sat leaning forward in his seat, jaw thrust forward, seeming to drain the images from the screen. As the show progressed he became more and more restive.

"What is this shit?" he muttered. He took it for 12 minutes, then stood, jaw more outthrust than usual, muttered something that sounded like, "Buncha goddamned shit," and rolled out of the briefing room.

They had shown *A Fistful of Dollars* the night before, and he'd liked *that* fine.

I stayed another half hour and then went to get some sleep. Big day tomorrow.

To be continued.

ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

by Cynthia E.D. Kite

EDITOR'S NOTE: SOF does not endorse any item reported in Adventure Quartermaster. When possible, an appropriate SOF staffer tests and evaluates products submitted. Sometimes this cannot be done and SOF simply publishes basic factual information about new products that we feel may be of interest to readers.

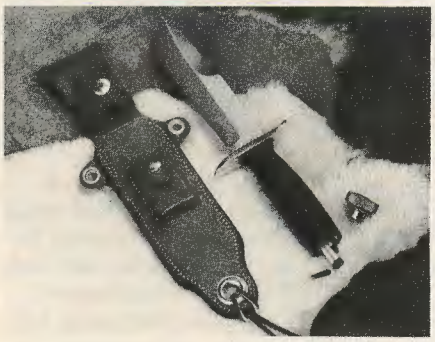
A SURVIVAL POINT ...

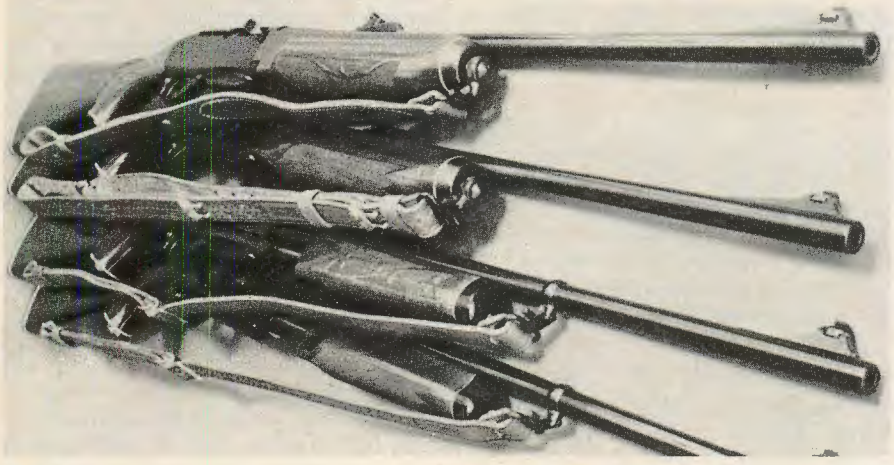
Bianchi Gunleather has expanded into knives with the "Night Hawk" — a new survival/fighting knife manufactured for Bianchi in Germany.

The six-inch blade is hammer-forged of stainless steel with a high-chromium content and has 20 sawteeth along the top edge. Its solid-brass hilt incorporates a water-tight compartment.

The sheath is Bianchi-made and features three tie-down places for attachment to pack or belt, and a front pocket contains a sharpening stone.

Each knife is serially numbered and, with sheath, retails for $85. For details contact *Bianchi Gunleather*, Dept. SOF, 100 Calle Cortez, Temecula, CA 92390.





NEW SWIVELS ...

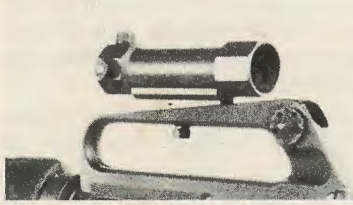
Michaels of Oregon, known for its Quick Detachable (QD) sling swivels, has wasted no time in producing a new set of swivels for the new Remington rifles. Their "Model 7400/Four," with its special fore-end adapter bolt swivel base and wood-screw rear base, is designed to fit the Remington Model Four and the 7400. Set Number for this swivel is 1171 and suggested retail price is $9.95.

The existing "Uncle Mike's swivels," Model 760BB, fit both the Model Six and the 7600 — two other additions to the Remington line. This set, No. 1441, retails for $8.95. Send $1 for a catalog or write for information to *Michaels of Oregon*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 13010, Portland, OR 97213.

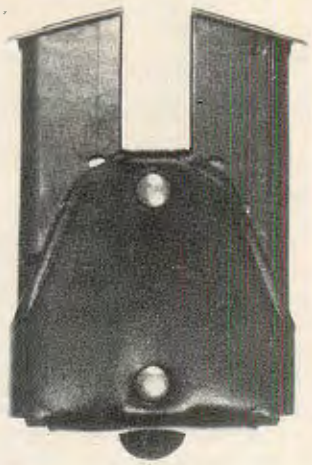
SPEED SIGHT ...

Armson Sales Ltd., of South Africa, manufactures what they claim to be "the fastest day/night combat gunsight." The sight is binocular in that the shooter keeps both eyes open and focuses only on the target. With the rifle in position, one eye is blocked by the sight and a red dot comes into sharp focus. Since refocusing on the front iron sight is unnecessary, ¾ of a second aiming time is saved.

An improvement of a similar sight chosen for the 1970 Special Forces raid on Son Tay prison in Vietnam, the binocular



sight measures 5¼ inches long and weighs only 5½ ounces. Shown here on the Colt AR-15, the sight retails for $210 with mount. For further information contact the U.S. distributors: *Leadership Keys, Inc.*, Dept. SOF, 25304 Farmington Rd., Farmington Hills, MI 48018.



CUSTOM CARRIER ...

SHADE offers the concealable, handcrafted DCL rig which accommodates two spare .45 ACP or 9mm parabellum magazines. Sculpted from black harness leather, the DCL makes reserve ammunition or specialty rounds instantly available.

The rig adapts to belts up to 1¾ inches wide, is priced at $22.50 and is available from *SHADE*, Dept. SOF, 1377 "K" St., Suite 515, Washington, D.C. 20005.

IN ADDITION ...

Devel Corporation introduces a new magazine-conversion pack for the S&W M-59 which increases its magazine capacity from 14 to 16 rounds.

The components contained in the pack include Devel's newly designed follower which improves function and feeding, an extra-power Wolff spring made of finest wire which provides superior fatigue life as compared to standard factory spring, and a newly designed floor plate.

The conversion pack — sufficient to convert two magazines — retails for $18.95 from *Devel Corporation*, Dept. SOF, 3441 W. Brainard Rd., Cleveland, OH 44122.

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

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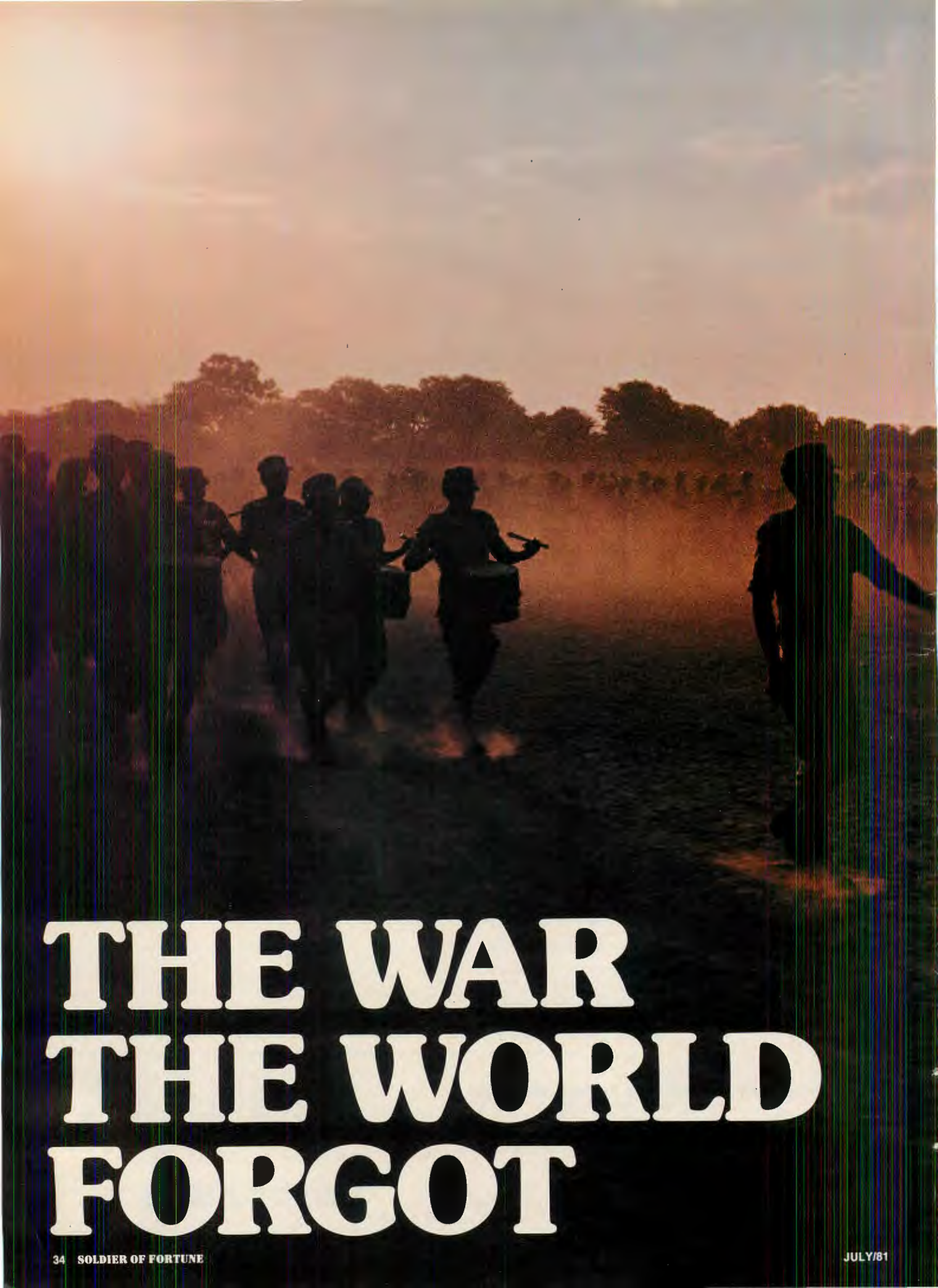


THE WAR THE WORLD FORGOT

SOFer In Angola, Part I

Text & Photos by Smith Hempstone

WHEN one's destination is the guerrilla killing-ground of Angola, deep in the black heart of Africa, getting there most assuredly is not half the fun.

The decision to make this dubious journey to write about a war the world forgot grew out of my meeting with Jonas Savimbi, leader of the National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA) — the anti-communist nationalist movement battling Angola's Marxist government and its Cuban sepoys — during his visit to Washington in November of 1979.

There is an electricity about the man. Here, for once, was an African nationalist who knew how to lead men: from out front. Savimbi is no parlor general who hangs around the delegates' lounge at the United Nations complaining about the injustice of life. He is among the world's most experienced guerrilla leaders. He's led his men in battle against Angola's Portuguese colonial masters for a decade. In the five years since then, he's fought Cuban, Russian, East German and Angolan government troops for his country's freedom.

From time to time his men clashed with East German-advised SWAPO terrorists bent on "liberating" South West Africa from their Angolan bases, or with the descendants of the late Moise Tshombe's Katangan gendarmes, who twice have attacked Zaire's Shaba (Katanga) Province from their Angolan lairs. In 1976, when the West abandoned Angola to its fate, Savimbi nearly lost everything, including his life. But unlike Holden Roberto — another pro-Western Angolan nationalist leader who'd fled to the more congenial climate of France — Savimbi fought on from the bush. Now, he told me, the tide was turning.

Physically, Savimbi is an impressive specimen: barrel-chested and narrow-hipped, clear-eyed, with teeth that are large, white and very even; he has a broad nose, skin the color of well-rubbed ebony and a curly, black beard. Tieless and wearing a black leather jacket, Savimbi strode into Washington's posh International Club on the balls of his feet, like a panther stalking its prey: wary, alert and prepared for any challenge.

Articulate in English, he proved highly intelligent, meeting the loaded questions of leftist journalists head-on. He conceded nothing; he refused to recant: yes, at one time he had accepted help from the South African government and from the Central Intelligence Agency.

He will accept help from the devil if it would contribute toward making his country free. He has fought for 15 years, and he will fight for another 15, if that's what it takes to drive the Cubans out of Angola.

I told Savimbi I'd like to come to West Africa to see for myself how his war against the communists was going. He suggested an interview in Washington. But I told him that, while the struggle was his story, I could tell it only within the physical context of his country, against a backdrop of war. He sipped his weak scotch-and-soda for a minute, shrugged and agreed to my proposal, introducing me to his New York representative, a rather furtive little man.

In January of 1980, I took out a

HE will accept help from the devil if it would contribute toward making his country free.

UPPER LEFT: White mercenary flier of DC-4 talks with UNITA Maj. Jean Bock. CENTER: UNITA guerrillas welcome writer Smith Hempstone upon his arrival at their headquarters. LOWER LEFT: There are Portuguese serving with UNITA forces in Angola. Portuguese soldier in front is armed with Romanian AKM (note laminated wooden foregrip shaped like pistol grip) and has Russian RGD-5 anti-personnel hand grenade attached to his web gear. RGD-5 weighs 310 grams, can be thrown 30 meters and has an effective fragment radius of 15 to 20 meters. Soldier behind him is armed with Soviet AKMS. RIGHT: UNITA soldier stands in parade-rest position used by Portuguese-influenced troops loyal to Jonas Savimbi. He is armed with Hungarian Short Rifle, variant of the Soviet AKM. Weapon ID can be ascertained by the perforated sheet-metal forearm with nylon foregrip and no upper handguard. Weapon also has pronounced muzzle brake and no bayonet lug. Single-strut stock folds sideways and rear sight is graduated to only 800 meters.

$500,000 insurance policy. I knew, of course, what I was getting myself into. I'd lived in Africa for eight years, from 1956 until 1964, and since then had paid several visits to war-torn Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). In my more than a quarter-century as a newspaperman, I'd covered nearly a dozen wars, conflicts and insurgencies, ranging in character from Vietnam and the 1967 Arab-Israeli war to the tag-end of Mau Mau and Gen. Mula Mustapha Barzani's 1974 Kurdish rebellion against Iraq.

At age 52, I had no business running around the boondocks with a bunch of African guerrillas of uncertain pedigree: my syndicated newspaper column was doing well, and I had the futures of my wife and five-year-old daughter to think about.

Yet I had to admit that, in the tinsel falseness of Washington, I missed the brotherhood of men joined together in battle. Since those far-off days when it had been my signal honor as a 22-year-old to lead Marines in battle, I had never forgotten Napoleon's admonition to his lieutenants: march toward the sound of the guns. To me, the remembered smell of burning cordite was as sweet as the scent of a woman's perfume. I vowed I would go to this war, but that it would be my last — of choice (I trusted) and not of necessity.

I soon discovered, however, that getting to Angola is easier said than done.

Friends in the CIA expressed interest and sympathy but, under the regime of Adm. Stansfield Turner, dared not help on pain of losing their jobs; they were unwilling or unable even to provide me with a decent map (I later obtained an excellent one from the Army Map Service) or an English-Ovimbundu dictionary. Their British cousins, who had helped me once before, were equally standoffish.

(The Carter Administration and Prime Minister James Callaghan's British Labor government at the time were engaged in trying to impose a settlement on Ian Smith's secessionist Rhodesian regime, and seeking to force South Africa out of South West Africa on terms unacceptable to Pretoria. Neither the American nor the British governments wanted any boats rocked in southern Africa.)

I asked the help of a friend who is the ambassador from a neighboring (and conservative) African nation. He shook his head emphatically:

"We wouldn't touch it," he said, "but I'll give you a piece of free advice: don't make your arrangements through New York. It's so riddled with electronic surveillance that every intelligence agency in the world, including some thoroughly unpleasant ones, will know what you're up to."

Since I knew the Angolan govern-

ment's counter-intelligence net was run by the East Germans, I got his point. And as I really hadn't taken to Savimbi's New York agent — nothing specific, I just didn't care for the cut of his jib, and it was, after all, my life that would be placed at risk — that suited me. But how to get in touch with Savimbi? Over the next few weeks, I tried many channels — none worked.

Finally, through the intercession of an American resident in Paris, a private citizen who for the past three decades has been waging his personal war against communists in back alleys of the world, I made telephone contact with Jeremias Chitunda, then Savimbi's agent in France.

There followed, during the next six months, a series of trans-Atlantic telephone conversations and a meeting with Chitunda in a Washington bar. He was intelligent, and I sensed he could be trusted. The problem was to find a time when an airplane was available to spirit me from a neighboring African nation past Russian MiGs (flown by East Germans and Cubans) into Angola to a bush airstrip near where Savimbi was operating.

Once I was alerted (by a telephone call from St. Louis, Mo., of all places) to be ready to leave within 48 hours. I was literally on my way to Washington's Dulles Airport, ticket in hand and $4,000 in my money belt, when Chitunda scrubbed the mission: Conditions on the ground, he said, were "not suitable," whatever that meant. Among the things it could have meant were that Savimbi was involved in operations far from the airstrip, that the airstrip itself was threatened, that no charter aircraft was available or that the neighboring African country was making waves about my passage through its territory.

Finally, on 10 September of last year, I was put on 48-hour alert again by Chitunda. My instructions were to fly to the capital of an African republic near Angola, check into a specific hotel and wait there for a call from a man named Mongo (not his real name). I was told to be at the hotel not later than 14 September and to be prepared

REPEAL CHURCH AMENDMENT

Readers should take special note of the "Church Amendment" referred to in the accompanying story. It essentially prohibits the United States from lending assistance to groups fighting against communist puppet governments getting direct military assistance, manpower and weapons, from the Soviet Union.

There presently are only two such movements: UNITA in Angola and the Mujahideen in Afghanistan.

SOF urges its readers to write their congressmen and senators seeking repeal of the "Church Amendment."

to leave immediately for the Angolan bush.

On 12 September, I caught a TWA flight from Dulles to Charles de Gaulle, then took a taxi into Paris for what I knew would be my last gourmet meal for some weeks. While there is something to be said for doubling back occasionally, it is generally healthier, once embarked on such a venture, not to dawdle on the way. I caught another plane that afternoon, bound for my African destination.

As my plane circled over the African capital, I asked the French businessman sitting next to me how much I should pay for a taxi from the airport to my hotel. He shrugged his shoulders:

"Perhaps $60, perhaps $100. But it can be a little risky at this time of night. The driver may take a wrong turn and suffer a convenient flat tire: you'll be robbed, beaten up, perhaps killed. I have a car meeting me, and I go past your hotel. It would be more sensible for you to come with me."

It was 0100 on 14 September. It was stiflingly hot and the arrival lounge of the airport was bedlam, with passengers elbowing one another to get through the health authorities and immigration — a certain amount of money changed hands — to rescue their baggage before their suitcases disappeared into the African night.

An hour later, soaked with sweat, I was in the Frenchman's car, jolting over a poorly paved road toward the African capital's dim lights. It was only after the Frenchman had deposited me at the door of the hotel that it occurred to me he might have been in the pay of an Eastern European intelligence service. God looks after drunks, little children and overaged journalists.

Miraculously, the hotel had a room

UNITA troops on approach march to Mavinga.

for me, or at least they had a room for a "Mr. Smith," which I took. I unpacked, downed a stiff Jack Daniels and by 0300 was asleep.

I awoke at 0900, still tired and headachy from the many hours on the airplane, ordered breakfast in my room and waited for Mongo. No Mongo.

In the afternoon, being a little stir-crazy, I scribbled a note, taped it to the door — "I'm at the swimming pool" — and claimed a deck chair. I had the rest of the afternoon and the evening to reflect on what I had gotten myself into. Still, the pool was cool, the beer good (it should have been at $3 a bottle) and the sunbathing airline stewardesses pretty. I felt a long way from home. I was.

No Mongo the next morning or afternoon. But I dared not leave the hotel lest he come while I was out, think I had scrubbed the assignment and not return. Finally, the evening of 15 September, the telephone in my room rang. I jumped about a foot out of my chair.

"This is Mongo," a disembodied voice said softly. "May I come up?" Indeed he might.

Mongo turned out to be a brisk young Angolan who spoke fair English, held the rank of major in Savimbi's army and ran the UNITA intelligence network in the African republic. After I had satisfied myself — by asking questions that Chitunda had suggested — that he was indeed who and what he said he was, we got down to business.

Yes, he said, there would be a plane to fly me into guerrilla country. That was good news, since the alternative was walking a couple of hundred miles. Even better: he could pretty well guarantee a plane to get me out in time to make connections to Paris by 3 October, which I needed to do to make an Eastern European assignment.

Yes, Savimbi was operating near the landing strip and, yes, it looked as if I might be able to take part in a major guerrilla offensive operation. No, he couldn't say when my plane would leave for Angola; perhaps as soon as tomorrow. I should remain ready to leave on a few hours' notice and take everything with me when I left: I might not be coming back the same way.

Mongo admonished me to stay in the hotel and keep my mouth shut about where I was going — the city was riddled with Angolan and communist-bloc intelligence agents. On no account was I to go near the American embassy.

He would come again when there was news.

For two frustrating days, I sat in the hotel. Finally, Mongo called at last to say he would pick me up at dawn the next morning in the hotel lobby. I ran down the checklist of essentials to go

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Smith Hempstone is a syndicated newspaper columnist and free-lance writer. He served as a Marine infantry platoon leader under the legendary Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller in the First Marine Regiment, First Marine Division, during the Korean War and made the fighting retreat from the Chosin Reservoir (see "Betrayal in North Korea," SOF, April '81). A frequent contributor to Reader's Digest, he will now become the same for SOF.

—Bob Poos

LEFT: UNITA soldiers carry variety of Soviet, Romanian, Hungarian, Chinese and Free-World weapons. This soldier is armed with Chinese Type 66 rifle, variant of Soviet AKM. Note permanently attached folding triangular bayonet. UPPER RIGHT: Smith Hempstone, author of "The War The World Forgot." Hempstone was a Marine infantry officer in Korean War. CENTER: Female members of UNITA. LOWER RIGHT: UNITA seeks to educate its people. This is a literacy class.

into my shoulderbag: maps, compass, flashlight, camera, film, tape recorder, cassettes, notebooks, ballpoint pens, hunting knife, mosquito net, malaria suppressant, antibiotics, soft hat, spare socks, undershorts and shirt. My boots were in good shape; I felt sure I could walk out if I had to. I telephoned my wife in the States to tell her I was going in — and what she should do if I hadn't reappeared in a month — and grabbed a couple of hours' sleep.

A bleary-eyed Mongo was waiting for me in the shadows of the deserted lobby at dawn. As we drove through the ramshackle city — I had known it in its colonial heyday a quarter of a century ago; no building appeared to have been painted or pothole filled since that day — African women were swaying to market with great baskets of bananas and cassava perched on their heads. Wisps of wood smoke hung like grey wreaths in the motionless air. The day was not an hour old, and already it was hot.

At a rundown African hotel in the native quarter of town, beside the great, slow-flowing river, we wolfed a piece of stale bread washed down by a cup of bitter coffee, switched cars and headed for the airport.

As we sped along, Mongo kept glancing in the rearview mirror: a blue car behind us sped up when we accelerated, slowed down when we did, always keeping the same distance behind us.

"Following?" I inquired.

"Maybe," Mongo grunted.

We turned off the potholed highway short of the passenger terminal, sped past a sleepy sentinel at the gate and onto the apron of the freight terminal. The tarmac was littered with dozens of planes in various stages of cannibalization — most of them unmarked. We screeched to a stop beside a venerable DC-4. There was a small metal ladder and a knotted rope hanging from its open rear door.

"Get aboard," Mongo ordered, "and be quick."

I clambered up the ladder, using the rope to steady myself. The 46-year-old plane was hot as an oven, despite the innumerable holes in its fuselage. The interior was stripped down, but four well-worn seats had been affixed in the rear. A pile of freight lay in a jumble forward. There was no toilet, and the emergency exits were marked in Danish. This was a plane that had been around.

Two shirtsleeved white men were in the cockpit checking the instrument panel. Oblivious to the smell of gasoline, both were smoking.

The pilot was a Frenchman, his companion a former Portuguese air force officer who served Savimbi. The pilot said he had paid $200,000 for the

Continued on page 84

YEARN FOR A

Thompson M1928 .45-caliber. Conceived as a "trenchbroom" to sweep the deadlocked Western Front, the Auto-Ordnance Corp.'s first product arrived too late for the war. First official military recognition came from the USMC in 1927. Its fearsome reputation and aesthetic appeal have made it a prized weapon for guerrillas and irregular forces from Ulster to Vietnam. The M1928 weighs 10 lbs. 12 oz., fires at a rate of 725 rpm and has a muzzle velocity of 920 fps. Illustrations reproduced from "The Complete Machine Gun 1885 To The Present." By permission of Phoebus Publishing Company/BPC Publishing Limited.

DID you ever want to own a full-auto weapon, and at the same time be secure in the knowledge that it's just as legal as a Parker shotgun or a collector's percussion Colt? In most states it can be done. Like most activities regulated by government, the process is by no means simple, but it's by no means as impossible as many self-annointed experts would have you believe. Remember that the alternative is that an illegal machine gun owns you — you cannot enjoy shooting it, displaying it or even hiding it without the certainty that it will eventually cost you some expensive lawyer's time, and more probably some slammer time. Do it right or don't do it at all.

A lot of folks have had this dream, and for many of them it has become a reality. If you have the desire it's likely that you, too, can legally purchase an automatic weapon. Even though the government and the establishment media have tried to discourage private ownership of such weapons, it is still — in most cases — easy and legal to do. So if you've ever had the urge to have your own machine gun, read on. I'll show you how to "rock and roll" right in there with the rest of us.

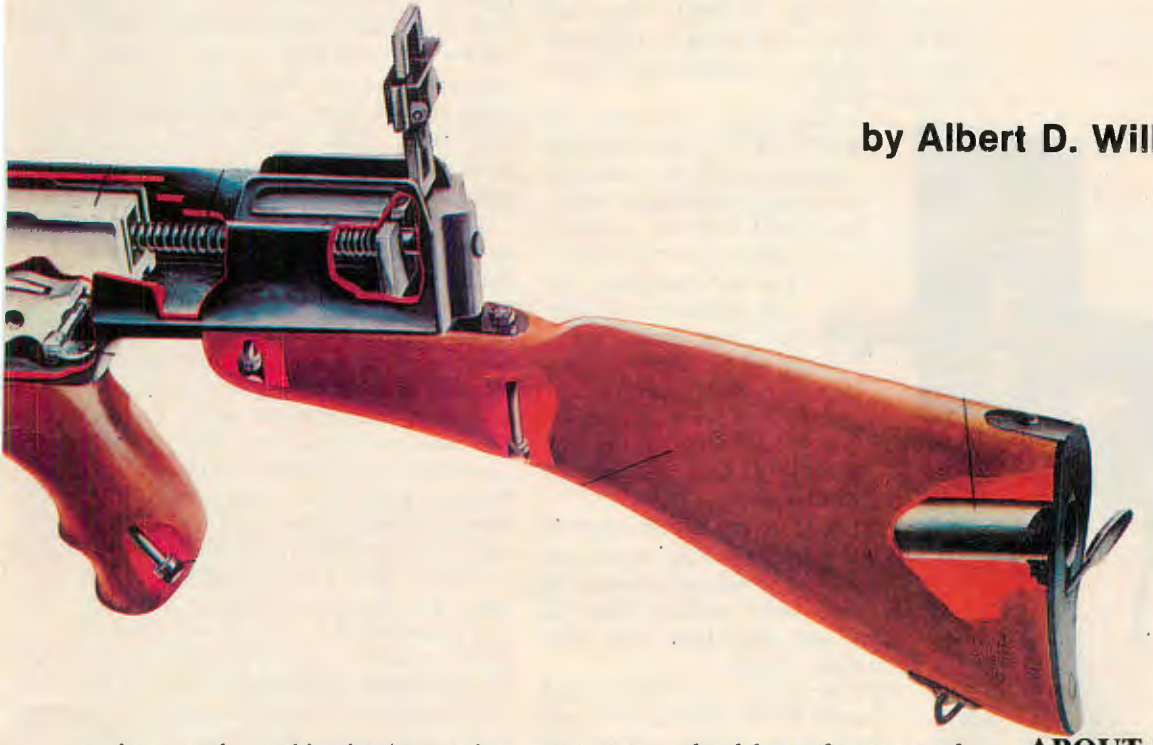
Let me emphasize right now that you should do nothing illegal. No attempts to "convert" a semi-automatic weapon or to use a "drop-in-sear" (see "Dangerous Conversion," SOF, December '80) should be considered without prior approval from BATF on Form 1, Application to Make a Firearm (plus $200 making tax). A bust for an unregistered automatic weapon is a big violation — with a big fine, a long sentence and a felony record. You would have to be a real mush-head to risk all that to save a couple hundred bucks. Besides, this article is going to explain how to do it all legally.

Just what is a machine gun? It depends on where you live. Some states consider a self-loading weapon with a large magazine capacity to be a machine gun whether it will fire fully automatic or not. Others call a weapon a machine gun if it will discharge more than one round with a single pull of the trigger. Some folks say that a fully automatic weapon which fires a rifle cartridge or larger is a machine gun, whereas, if it fires a pistol round then it is called a submachine gun. One of the books I'm going to tell you how to get will indicate just how they are defined in your state. When you get yours, you can call it whatever you wish.

Federal authorities consider machine guns to be any weapon which shoots, is designed to shoot or can be readily converted to shoot automatically more than one shot, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger. Frames,

MG?

Owning One Is Legal But Not So Easy



by Albert D. Williams

receivers and combination/conversion parts are also included in their definition.

The procedure for buying an automatic weapon, assuming that the piece is already properly registered, involves a paper trail which starts with fingerprint cards, photographs and the endorsement of your local police chief or county sheriff. If the transaction involves a dealer, he will help you through the maze and eventually forward the package to Washington for approval. Normally, the BATF requires about a month to process and approve a transfer. Note that you may not take possession of your new weapon until you have a piece of paper from the feds with your name on it.

Most people — of the law-abiding variety — can do all this legally. But there are exceptions. In most cases these exceptions are due to state or local laws. Disabling felony convictions, for example, or anything that would prohibit a person from possessing an *ordinary* firearm are common reasons for disapproval. Federal law permits private ownership of machine guns if it is allowed by state and local regulations. If you are an exception, you now know who to blame.

The easiest way to determine if you are an exception or not is to go directly to the BATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms), an agency of the U.S. government. I don't advise you to inquire of your state or local law-enforcement officials because I have found that — in most instances — they know little about the legalities of automatic-weapon ownership. However, they can tell you how to contact the BATF if it isn't listed under U.S. Government in your telephone book.

Better still, contact a Regulatory Enforcement Division inspector, who is charged with the responsibility and has the knowledge to answer these questions. He also won't ask any questions of you. The National Firearms Act Branch, Washington, D.C. 20226, is the definitive source for information. The branch approves or disapproves all transfer requests, gives permissions and maintains the machine-gun registry.

After determining whether or not you can buy an automatic weapon, you should ask for copies of two books which are distributed by the BATF: *State Laws and Published Ordinances — Firearms,* and *Your Guide to Firearms Regulation.* These publications will enable you to familiarize yourself with the exact laws concerning your area, as well as the regulations which govern the Class III (machine gun) dealers there. The first book mentioned gives you the definition of a machine gun for your state — if it differs from the federal definition.

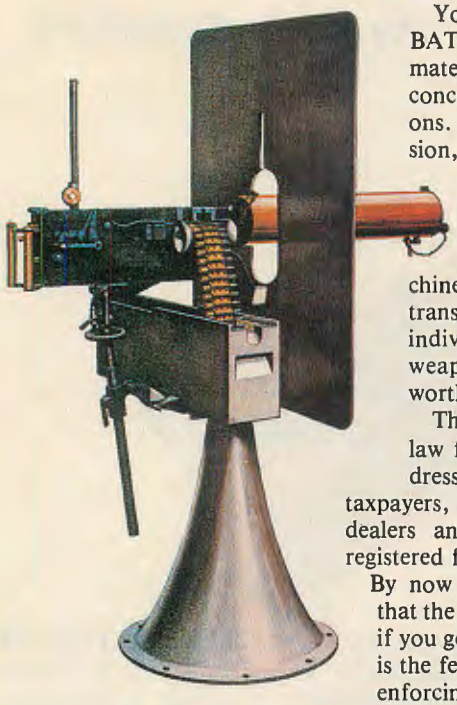
Note that some states, California is a

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Albert D. Williams is a dealer in Class III firearms in Haleyville, Ala. Williams says he finds it hard to believe how many "folks in this country today don't know that it is legal for civilians to purchase, possess and use machine guns." In this, his first article for SOF, Williams goes a long way toward clearing up this commonly held misconception by detailing the purchasing procedure as well as the legal ramifications for those of our readers who may be interested in adding a machine gun to their collection. —C.E.D. Kite

notable example, require additional documentation from their own departments of justice. Others may flatly forbid ownership. Generally, your local BATF office can tell you where you stand if the information is not obvious from a look at the books. If permits from your state are also required, note that BATF will not approve a transfer to you until you have made the state folks happy.

These books are usually furnished to firearms dealers, but with a bit of persuasion on your part, the BATF agent will give you copies — providing his office has them. Generally, a criminal enforcement division will not.



.303 Maxim on cone mounting with shield. This was a favorite naval weapon in the days of the ironclads. It was intended to keep the enemy's decks cleared and repel boarders if necessary.

You might also ask the BATF for any other printed material which it has available concerning automatic weapons. The BATF has, on occasion, published various booklets and pamphlets for distribution to the public. These explain many of the facets of machine-gun ownership (such as transfers between unlicensed individuals transporting the weapon), and are usually worth reading.

The Bureau is prohibited by law from releasing names, addresses or any information on taxpayers, which includes Class III dealers and individuals who have registered firearms.

By now you've probably noticed that the BATF comes with the turf if you get into machine guns. This is the federal agency charged with enforcing the firearms laws. If you are going to own a machine gun, you are going to have to deal with the BATF. You can deal with them up front—legally—or you can deal with them later from a much weaker position. Better to do it up front.

Weapon Choices

At this point, it's a good idea to start deciding what kind of automatic weapon you want to buy. It's good to have something in mind before approaching dealers. With a few exceptions (there are always exceptions), almost anything ever made is available — in some quantity and at some price. The rarity and demand for some models cause them to be very expensive. I suggest, however, that for your first machine gun you buy one being currently manufactured in the United States.

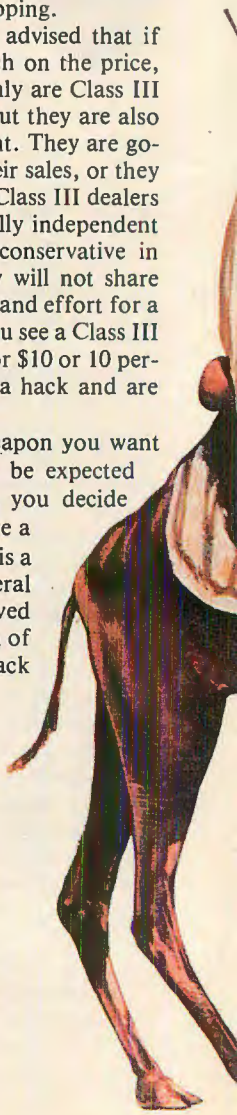
There are several reasons for choosing a domestic weapon. First of all, they are easy to get and the supply is good. Because of this fact, competition between sellers tends to hold the price down. Also, spare parts and ammunition are available and relatively cheap. Further, the quality of these weapons is surprisingly good — malfunctions and breakages are uncommon. And, finally, there's the charge for your ego. Who in the entire world, for example, wouldn't know what you were holding if you stepped out on the firing range and emptied a magazine with a Thompson?

After you get some idea about the kind of machine gun you want, you'll want to start talking to dealers. There usually aren't many Class III dealers in any area. This fact, plus the federal regulations which prevent you from purchasing a machine gun from an out-of-state dealer unless it is first transferred to a dealer in your home state, creates more of a seller's market than you might initially suppose, although you *can* legally buy a registered firearm from another resident of your state. With this in mind, it's a good idea to stay on good terms with your dealer.

The dealer will normally be interested in anyone who wants to buy a machine gun. He'll help you make your choice of weapon and, if he doesn't have it in stock, he'll order it for you. You should be cautious, however, when picking out and pricing a machine gun. Relatively few models are now being manufactured in this country. This means that there is no "list" or other "standard" price for most of the available machine guns. Most dealers will charge whatever you will pay, and it's tough to do much comparison shopping.

On the other hand, be advised that if you try to niggle *too* much on the price, you'll discover that not only are Class III dealers relatively scarce, but they are also generally quite independent. They are going to make a profit on their sales, or they aren't going to sell. Most Class III dealers I know are solid, financially independent citizens who tend to be conservative in their political views. They will not share their knowledge, expertise and effort for a negligible profit. And if you see a Class III dealer advertising to sell for $10 or 10 percent, then you are seeing a hack and are hereby forewarned.

If the dealer has the weapon you want in stock, you'll normally be expected to pay for it as soon as you decide you want it, or at least give a substantial deposit. There is a reason for this: the federal paperwork *must* be approved before you take possession of your weapon. If you back



Gatling-equipped camel. A trooper of the Afghan Camel Corps in 1874-77. Gatling's "Camel Gun" was built in prototype in 1871 and manufactured in 1874. Using a .45-caliber cartridge and weighing 135 lbs., it was designed to be fired from a tripod or from the back of a camel or elephant.

out after this paperwork has been completed, the dealer must write a note and return the paperwork to the National Firearms Administration (NFA) asking for cancellation, which they will cheerfully do. (It is no trouble for BATF to cancel.)

There is a federal transfer tax of $200 on each transfer of every machine gun. Transfers between dealers are exempt. Also exempt are transfers between manufacturers and dealers, law-enforcement agencies and the military, and a few others. If you are, however, just an average citizen, you can forget about being exempt. This transfer tax is a one-time payment. There are no other federal taxes or charges unless you decide to sell your weapon — in which case another federal transfer tax will be levied. Normally, the purchaser pays the transfer tax; however, legal responsibility to pay rests with the seller.

Your dealer will now assist you in preparing and submitting an application to the BATF in order to have the weapon transferred to you. This application consists of a BATF Form 4, *Application for Tax Paid Transfer*. Along with this form you'll be required to submit a set of your fingerprints and a passport-style photograph and authorization from a local federal attorney, marshal, chief of police or sheriff (other personnel listed in F-4). All these must be submitted in duplicate. Your dealer has all of the blank forms which are required, and he'll help you get fingerprints and photos done by competent people.

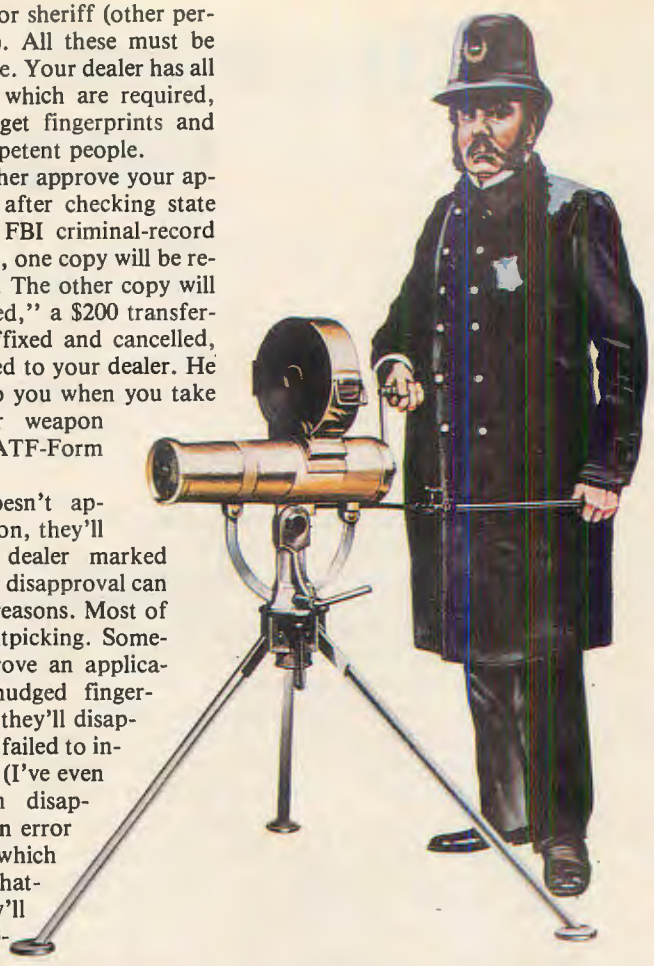
The BATF will either approve your application or not — after checking state and local laws and FBI criminal-record files. If it's approved, one copy will be retained by the BATF. The other copy will be marked "approved," a $200 transfer-tax stamp will be affixed and cancelled, and it will be returned to your dealer. He will give this copy to you when you take possession of your weapon after filling out the ATF-Form 4473.

If the BATF doesn't approve your application, they'll return it to your dealer marked "disapproved." This disapproval can be for a number of reasons. Most of them I classify as nitpicking. Sometimes they'll disapprove an application because of smudged fingerprints. Or, perhaps, they'll disapprove it because you failed to include your zip code. (I've even had an application disapproved because of an error in the serial number which *they* made.) But, whatever the reason, they'll tell you why your application was disapproved, whereupon you may submit another application with the deficiency remedied. I have never known of a disapproved application which was not eventually approved, but I suppose that if a criminal were to attempt to slip an application through, it might occur.

If your dealer doesn't have the weapon you want in stock, he'll have to order it. But before he can order it, he has to find it. If you've chosen some hard-to-get item, then this can be a real problem. He'll have to search advertising literature for a possible source. He'll place "want to buy" ads in various publications. He'll call numerous Class III dealers around the country, searching for your choice. Since telephone calls and advertising are not free, and since he doesn't work for nothing, you can expect to pay a considerable premium for this search. An unusual weapon also requires more time before you can finally take it home.

When your dealer finds a source for the weapon you want, he'll confirm the order with that source and send payment in full. You can expect to pay your dealer for this weapon *before* he orders it. The dealer from whom he orders will complete an application for a tax-exempt transfer and will send it to the BATF. When that dealer receives the approved application back,

Continued on page 74



Gatling Bulldog. The smallest of all Gatling guns was patented in July 1893. Intended for use by police, and shown here with a member of the New York Police Dept., its six barrels were only 12 inches long. Encased in bronze, it had a new extracting system designed to minimize the jamming that was characteristic of Gatling guns.

BIG JOHN MURPHY, 1943-1980

In Memoriam:

by John Early

IF immortality lies in what others remember of us, John Murphy is immortal.

John Murphy was the kind of man who left an impression on everyone he met. Almost always the impression was memorable and good; however, if you were foolish enough to bad-mouth professional soldiers, the impression was often violent.

Murphy and I went back some years together. We served together, humped many miles under rucksacks, sweated out a number of contacts, bled a little together and became good and fast friends.

At some other point in time, Murphy would probably have become a teacher or perhaps the dean of a small college and spent his years guiding students instead of leading men in combat. He held a Master's degree and worked for his Ph.D after returning from Rhodesia in 1978. But back in 1968, after college graduation, he became a Marine officer and, in 'A' Company, 1st Recon Battalion, Republic of Vietnam, John found himself in another role: he was a leader of combat soldiers. He was never to be far from that role again. He continued along the warrior's path until he died in the uniform of the South African army in October 1980.

Murphy, a man of great courage and good humor, was a magnificent leader. He was a legend in Rhodesia, where he served with the Rhodesian Light Infantry, C Squadron, Special Air Service and, finally, the Selous Scouts' Strike Force.

On his first raid into Mozambique, his ability and performance prompted the commander of Selous Scouts, Lt. Col. Ron Reid-Daly, to recommend Murphy for the Legion of Merit. Murphy's retort: "Keep your medal, Colonel; just let me lead the Strike Force."

For nearly two years, Murphy led the Strike Force on nearly every cross-border raid and pre-emptive strike the Rhodesian army carried out against communist terrorists in Mozambique and Zambia.

Murphy's leadership and courage were so respected and admired by the men of Selous Scouts that the mere rumor of a raid to be led by him was enough to cause dozens of troopers and NCOs to show up at the Strike Force HQ, asking to get in on the "job."

Murphy was "magic" under fire and his men knew it. He was at his best leading men in combat. That's what he loved and did best. He was a terrible organizer — that was my job — but under fire he was the best man to ever shoulder a rifle.

He was capable of great compassion and humor and the Scouts loved him for it. Once, in Mozambique, he tried to convince me of his gourmet-cooking ability with a mess tin piled high with what can only be described as slop. Before my horrified eyes and the amused smiles of our troops, he dumped together rice, bully beef, stewed tomatoes, a tin of sardines, a can of Vienna sausage, one tin of spaghetti, a dash of curry powder and a half bottle of hot sauce — just for body — and stirred this concoction with delight. Then, to add insult to injury, he piled a tin of sliced oranges on top. The troops howled at the sight of this meal. I was afraid to taste it. Murphy claimed it was delicious.

On another occasion, I watched him, tears streaming down his face, as he apologized to one of our wounded as we lifted the man aboard a medevac chopper. Murphy felt if he had led better, the man would not have been wounded.

Photo of Murphy taken in 1976 while he was 2IC of a commando in Rhodesian Light Infantry.

"Big John," as the scouts called him, cared about his men; loved them with that special bond men in combat form — and they returned the feelings in kind. On the day Murphy and his wife Susan left Rhodesia to return to the States, Salisbury International Airport was the scene of the largest party-cum-riot in its history. Almost every scout not in the bush — over 400 of them — descended on the airport to wish Murphy farewell.

Several scouts arrived in buses "liberated" from the unit motor pool and laid siege to the airport bar. It looked like Woodstock in cammies. Scouts, resplendent in beards, shoulder-length hair, tennis shoes, cammie shorts and FNs, took over the airport and proceeded to drink everything in sight, dance African tribal dances on the bar and sing the

traditional Chimiringa war songs — to see "Big John" off to the land of the Big PX.

Hours later, after the military police and riot squad had been called, but declined to intervene, the South African Airways 747 loaded John and Susan aboard and — nearly one hour late — departed for Jo'berg. There was a scout perched on every part of the airport's roof and veranda, saying farewell to their boss and friend. As we all sang the Selous Scout regimental song, the 747 broke ground and disappeared into the sky. There wasn't a dry eye in the crowd.

A civilian turned to a scout standing next to me and said, "You would have thought it was Ian Smith leaving."

The bearded sergeant major turned and said, "Hell, no, man, that was Major Murphy. We wouldn't have come for the bloody prime minister!"

Murphy was a man of splendid courage, the kind that compelled other men to follow him. On one occasion, our mission was to infiltrate and attack the ANC (African National Congress) headquarters in a town held by 400 to 600 Frelimo troops. Assigned for this mission were 22 soldiers and two American officers. The night attack would receive no artillery support, and the Rhodesian army had only a dozen illumination rounds for the 81mm mortars in our sector. The op went fine until, in the middle of the town, we encountered a dug-in 12.7mm heavy machine gun (HMG).

Our point element literally fell into the pit with the gun crew — and all hell broke loose. Soon the entire battalion perimeter was firing and we were in the middle of the shooting match. I radioed Murphy that we were taking fire from 360 degrees and the volume was increasing.

His reply: "Good stuff, now we got 'em." After nearly seven hours of skirmishing and crawling, we made it back to the Rhodesian side of the line. Through it all, Murphy was having the time of his life. He was leading his men and no one was better at it.

After leaving Rhodesia, Murphy returned to Columbia, S.C., and tried to settle into the academic life at the University of South Carolina. But his love of combat was stronger than he realized and, after less than a year, he signed on with the South African army's parachute battalion as company commander of their pathfinder company. He held that position for nearly a year, then transferred to the elite Number One Reconnaissance Commando at Durban. (This highly secret unit is responsible for many raids into Angola and Mozambique against SWAPO terrorists.)

It was while receiving advanced parachute training near Durban with this unit that John Murphy's parafoil fatally malfunctioned.

After a dozen decorations and three wars, Major John K. Murphy, Jr. died at 37 years of age. He was buried near his father, Lt. Col. John K. Murphy, in Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

NEWS FROM INSIDE LAOS

Gen. Vang Pao Reveals Latest Developments

by Jim Graves

FORMER Laotian Maj. Gen. Vang Pao's fight continues.

Maj. Gen. Vang Pao broke away from his latest swing around the U.S. to visit with *Soldier of Fortune* Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and other SOF guests in April.

Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, General Vang Pao and Earl Bleecher (holding Colt AR-15 with new ultra-light Litton M-845 Night Scope).

The only Muong tribesman ever to become a general officer in the Royal Laotian Army and the recipient of the first annual Bull Simons Memorial Award at the first SOF convention, Vang Pao continues his fight against the communists that began with the French in 1945.

Although most of his efforts are directed at helping the approximately 30,000 Muong tribesmen here in the U.S., Vang Pao also remains involved in the affairs of Southeast Asia and dropped a bombshell on the SOF staff during his visit.

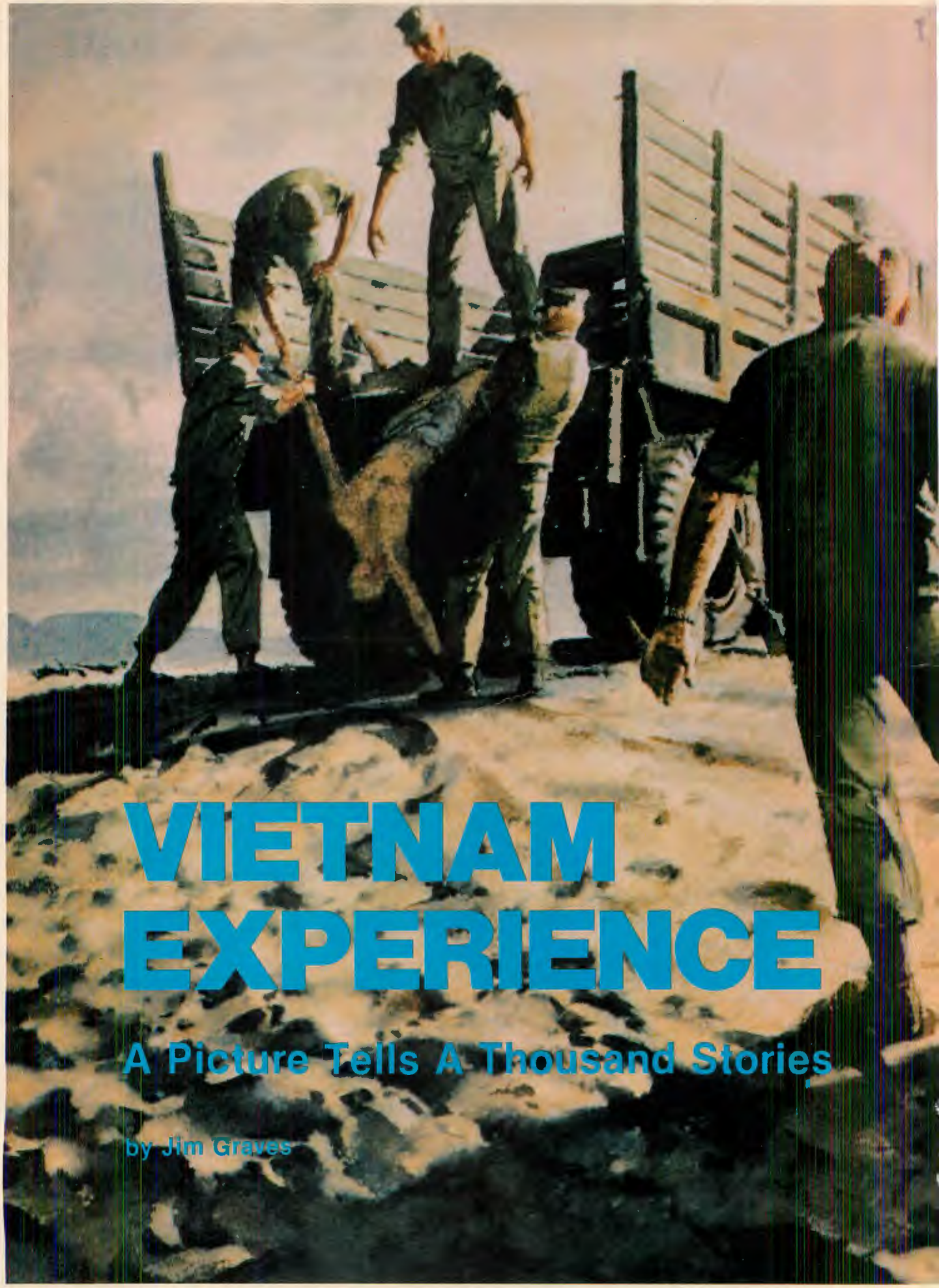
Vang Pao's bombshell was a matter-of-fact statement that his forces (which according to Vang Pao number approximately 20,000 men from western and southern Laos) and some of the 50,000 Pathet Lao (Laotian communists) have reached an understanding and are cooperating in activities aimed against the North Vietnamese troops stationed in Laos.

He stated that the Pathet Lao are disenchanted with the North Vietnamese because the Vietnamese are taking all the food, treating the people harshly and essentially acting like the imperialistic conquerers they are.

Vang Pao also keeps up on affairs in other Southeast Asian countries and confirmed that Pol Pot still runs the Khmer Rouge and is still in Cambodia — despite all the reports to the contrary in the Western press and on the floor of the United Nations. After killing millions of their own countrymen, the Khmer Rouge tried to clean up their image by leaking out that the KR was no longer controlled by Pol Pot.

"Not true," said Vang Pao.

It appears that resistance to the North Vietnamese all over Southeast Asia — in Vietnam from the Montagnards and unrepentant South Vietnamese, in Cambodia from the Free Khmers and in Laos from the Muong and Pathet Lao — continues to grow.



VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

A Picture Tells A Thousand Stories

by Jim Graves

Clean-up
Gene Keebe, USN Collection

"ONE way or another, Vietnam profoundly affected an entire generation of Americans — my generation. It changed our lives. It frustrated our ambitions and wasted our ideals. It divided us. And even now, five years after the war finally came to its conclusion, the experience continues to be the most significant event of our lives — as significant as WWII has been to our parents.

"There are many in this country who would prefer to forget the Vietnam experience, who see it only as a horrible nightmare from which nothing useful can be learned. Oddly enough, the majority of Americans who were in Vietnam do not share that feeling, although our silence over these past few years has apparently been construed to mean that we do. You see, we know that there is much more worth saying about Vietnam. The burden is now on us to prove it.

"It's questionable whether artists really help shape the course of the future, but in this case I think we can. Artists who were in Vietnam have a unique insight: whether we're American or Vietnamese, we see that experience in terms of people, individual human beings. We're also able to see it in terms of life as well as death. Together, through our art, we can provide a perspective of that time and place that most Americans frankly don't have. We can create a starting point for the imagination, for the emotions and for conversation. Getting people to talk — Americans who were in Vietnam, Vietnamese now living in this country and Americans who have never seen Vietnam other than on a TV screen — now that would be an accomplishment.

"Our only hope is that we can go on from here. This, after all, is just the beginning." —Richard Strandberg.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above statement is excerpted from the brochure for *The Vietnam Experience* Art Show, Minnesota Landmark Center, St. Paul, Minn., 11-30 November 1980.

RICHARD Strandberg, who did his tour in Vietnam with the Navy PBR (Patrol Boat River) Force, conceived the show and nursed it into existence with months and months of hard work.

Strandberg quickly learned that the corporations which usually finance art shows turned a cold shoulder to *The Vietnam Experience:* too controversial, even today. The necessary funds came from small businesses, private donors and finally one generous check from the Minnesota Northstars hockey team. Still, the individual artists had to pay to have their works shipped and for their own transportation to St. Paul. The Navy and Marine Corps also sent a number of Vietnam works from their collections — some of which are reprinted with their permission in this article. Space for the exhibit was donated by the Landmark Center in St. Paul. Strandberg and other Minnesota-area veterans donated their time to build walls and display tables for the paintings, photographs, drawings and sculptures.

Bringing Back A Buddy

Michael Arlen Boyett, Photo by Jim Graves

For What? Top Of Hill 881 South

Austin Deuel, Photo by Jim Graves

Strandberg's hard work and dogged determination paid off. The show was an overwhelming success — and a moving experience for the veterans and general public who turned out in record numbers — over 800 for opening night — to make *The Vietnam Experience* one of the most popular ever hosted by the Landmark Center. Perhaps the experience was most moving for the artists who were there to watch the adulation of their work.

The veterans, with memories rushing back, sometimes grinning at things long forgotten, sometimes choked with tears, emerged from the exhibit with a renewed pride in their Vietnam experience.

As I stood before Gene Keebe's "Sense of Humor-Vietnam" (see page 53), a woman, lured from an exhibit of French paintings to the Vietnam exhibit, pondered: "I wonder if they really did things like that over there."

"Yes ma'am," I said, "we did. We were human beings when we went there and still were when we came home."

Church, East of Con Thien
Sgt. H.C. Casselli, USMC Collection

Junk Patrol Force
Edmond J. Fitzgerald, USN Collection

Rifleman
John Witt, USMC Collection

M-60 Man
Michael Arlen Boyett,
Photo by Jim Graves

Sense of Humor-Vietnam
Gene Keebe, USN Collection

Da Nang Harbor
Gene Keebe, USN Collection

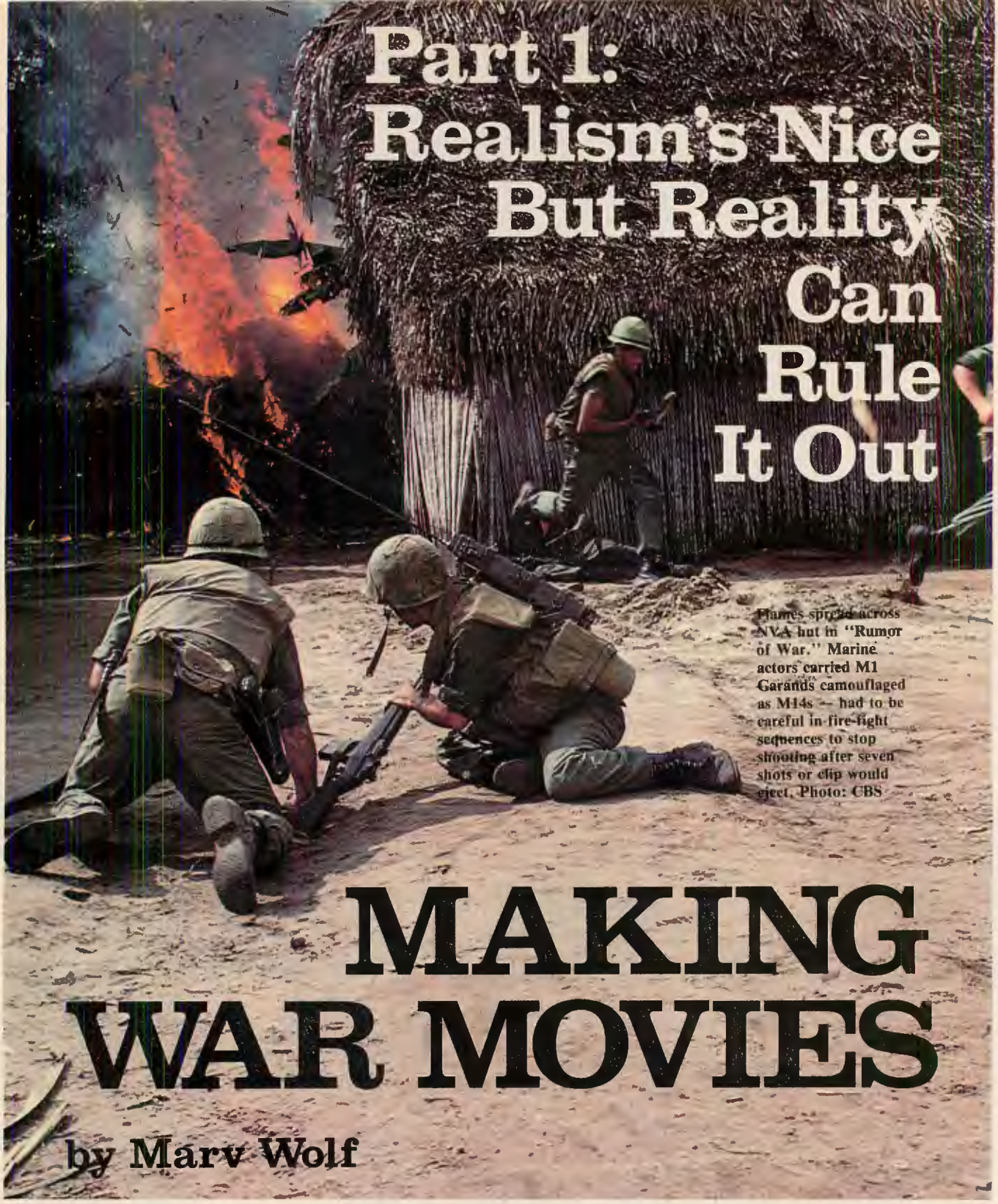
Sandbag Detail
John Charles Roach, USN Collection

Even God Is Against Us
Austin Deuel, Photo by Jim Graves

Bridge Site 5, Hue, Vietnam
John Charles Roach, USN Collection

Mail Run
Lance Cpl. Gary W. Moss, USMC Collection

Reflected Night Battle, Fire Fight At Marble Mountain
Gene Keebe, USN Collection



Part 1: Realism's Nice But Reality Can Rule It Out

Flames spread across NVA hut in "Rumor of War." Marine actors carried M1 Garands camouflaged as M14s — had to be careful in fire-fight sequences to stop shooting after seven shots or clip would eject. Photo: CBS

MAKING WAR MOVIES

by Marv Wolf

THE setting was Vietnam, 1965, a Marine Corps platoon leader's vivid memoir of life and death amidst the jungle streams and remote hamlets of I Corps. The book and the television movie bore the same name: *Rumor of War*.

One of Pat Coulter's jobs as USMC technical adviser for the film was to ensure technical accuracy in its production, and one of the most obvious details was the rifle each actor/Marine grunt carried. To those who were there — and Coulter was — it seemed simple: Marines used M14s.

"The problem was that there were *no* M14s available. The government has them all locked up — not even the NRA can get them," recalls Maj. Coulter, officer-in-charge of the Corps' West Coast public affairs office.

The eventual solution was to use cosmetically modified M1 Garands. "We cut standard M14 magazines in half, glued them to the bottom of the stock beneath the bolt, had some fake flash suppressors made and attached them to the front end and, presto, bogus M14 look-alikes," chuckles Coulter.

"But of course there was a problem with fire-fight sequences. We had to keep after all the actors not to fire more than seven shots while the cameras were rolling. Every time there was an eighth shot fired, that clip would come springing out, and of course anyone watching or even listening to the sound track would know

what it was and start wondering, 'What the hell is going on?' So we had to reshoot a number of scenes because some of the actors would get so carried away with the action that they'd forget or lose count of the rounds fired."

That is only one of the problems encountered by military technical advisers as they work with some of the 3,500 motion-picture and TV production companies that operate in the Los Angeles area — and it's one of the easiest to handle. Each of the four military services maintains a West Coast public affairs office in Los Angeles and, while they also deal with reporters and writers for magazines, newspapers and book publishers, the majority of their day-to-day effort is directed at the film industry.

Each of the services — the Coast Guard is represented as well, but it is part of the Department of Transportation — has its own unique marching orders with regard to the film industry. While all fall under the same Department of Defense regulations, the individual services bring different goals and different methods to their jobs. The Marines, represented by Pat Coulter, nurture their spit-and-polish image, which explains how it was that Coulter wound up telling a major film star he'd have to get a hair cut before he'd be allowed to play a Marine colonel — and then had a Marine gunnery sergeant give him a haircut that actually met Corps standards.

"We made *Rumor of War* down in Mexico," explains Coulter. "Steve Forest played the part of Col. Atherton. He was waiting for me when I got down to my hotel in Mexico, had this big cowboy hat on. introduced himself, went into my room with me and we got to talking. He says, 'You know, I'm playing Col. Atherton in this film.' I told him I'd been a big fan of his for a long time, and he says, 'You know my stylist gave me a haircut that he *assured* me will pass any kind of military inspection.'

"And I said, 'Great, it solves one of our big problems.' He pulls off his hat to show me the haircut and I started snickering. I couldn't help it.

"I said, 'Steve, we got a problem. Your stylist was wrong.' And we're laughing about it and he gets a little serious and says, 'This is as short as I can possibly go. I've got another part coming up and I've got to have my hair long for it.'

"I said, 'It's got to be like this,' and I pointed to my own head. 'You're playing a Marine colonel. You set the example for your troops, and if anybody is going to have short hair, it's going to be the guy back at regimental headquarters.'

"We went out on the set the following day, and there was a barber there — a local stylist — and after about 2½ hours of cutting one hair at a time, with a great deal of controversy over each hair that was cut, we finally got it to where it was acceptable. And that taught me a lesson.

"I took one of the gunnies who was with me — we brought eight Marines down to Mexico with us — and asked him if he'd ever cut hair before, and he said, 'Only on a ship when one of the troops needed it bad.'

"I said, 'Congratulations, gunny, you're now the new company barber.' From then on he cut the hair of all the actors and the extras. Mine was the first he cut, just so I could see if he could do it, and it wasn't bad. So I told him that he'd got the job."

"Rumor of War" Marines prepare for action. USMC technical adviser provided as much realism for movie as possible — including 55-gallon POL drum (burning diesel fuel) at edge of each base-camp scene. Photo: CBS

"Little things help preserve realism."

Coulter's job on a movie set is to preserve the image of the Corps and, as far as the situation permits, add realistic touches that lend authenticity to any production that gets Marine support. Thus, during *Rumor of War*, Marines were shown wearing the ubiquitous OD plastic wristwatch threaded through the lapel buttonhole of their fatigue jackets — a detail suggested by Coulter. And in every base-camp scene, Coulter arranged to have, somewhere at the edge of the screen, at least one cut-off 55-gallon POL drum smokily burn diesel into the sky.

"We got letters from former Marines about that," chuckles Coulter. "They couldn't believe we were actually burning shit, just like it was in 'Nam. But little things like that help preserve the realism."

Sometimes there are problems that just can't be resolved and, when that happens, the technical adviser and the film's producers just have to make do. Such was the case with the Huey helicopters used during *Rumor of War*.

"There were darned few UH-1s in use by the Corps back in '65, and we knew that to be absolutely authentic we would need H-34s. But there just aren't that many around. So we settled for Hueys, and matched some of our shots with combat footage from the archives — footage that had been shot sometime later in the war.

"Then we had a problem with our Hueys, because we went and rented them from PEMEX [the government-owned Mexican oil company], along with their pilots. Well, the pilots were a little green, and the choppers were all white. The night before they were flown in, we painted the choppers with a water-soluble paint, but there was a heavy dew that night and, the next morning as we were flying them in to the set, every once in a while a whole glob of paint would just fly off. We had to keep a spot painter on the set constantly, touching up the aircraft before each scene. When the production was over, we just hosed them down real good and they were white again."

Dealing with the green pilots was a little hairier. "They had never had to fly knap-of-the-earth before, or in formation, and to me it looked like they weren't much good at hovering either. So our troops didn't jump off a couple of feet up as the choppers cruised along in formation in the LZ, because the pilots just couldn't handle it. If we had been in Vietnam *in 1965*, they would have been Marine pilots, and we would have done it better. But we were in Mexico, making a movie, and we just did the best we could," says Coulter.

Another Corps-supported project was *The Great Santini*, starring Robert

Duvall. It's the saga of a hard-driving, somewhat eccentric Marine Corps fighter pilot. Coulter was technical adviser for this film as well.

"Although there were a number of problems with the script that the Marine Corps was originally shown, we were very much interested in supporting this film," explains Coulter. "For one thing, it was the first film about Marine aviation since the 1951 production of *Flying Leathernecks*. For another, there was a good chance that the producers would go ahead and make the film even without our support. At least this way we could have a chance to remove some of the scenes that were not in the best interests of the Corps, and to tone down some of the other things."

"Military services will support only accurate portrayals."

The military services receive hundreds of requests for support from the film industry every year. In considering which of these to support, all decisions are governed by the same Defense Department regulation. But each service has some latitude under it. In general, military support for a film cannot cause the service to incur any liability, cannot cost the government any money and the government may supply the use of equipment only when it is not competing with any civilian supplier.

In addition, the military services will support only those productions which give, in their view, an accurate portrayal of military operations, historical incidents, persons or places. Each service considers requests from producers in the light of these guidelines and then makes a recommendation to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, which has the final say. But there is room for negotiation, and this is when scripts are rewritten. Eventually, either the service decides to support the production, with changes mutually agreed upon, or it passes.

"*Santini* had some problems, as far as the Marines were concerned, when it was submitted as a script," recalls Coulter. "For example, there was a scene which portrayed recruit abuse. A fake shooting is staged for the benefit of a recruit — one DI 'shoots' another with a blank from a .45, and they throw the 'body' in a trash dumpster.

"There were numerous scenes where the central character, Lt. Col. 'Bull' Meechum, beats his wife and kids. There were a couple of scenes which contained disparaging remarks about the Navy, and a scene where Bull deserts his post as Officer of the Day (OD) to help his son.

"But we had the airplanes — you can't just go out to your neighborhood airport and rent some F-4s — so we asked the producers to change or delete these scenes."

In addition to the scenes changed or deleted, the Corps lobbied for an additional scene. "We wanted to balance the story, to show that although Bull Meechum was indeed a Marine aviator, he wasn't a *typical* one. So we got the producers to add a scene that shows him reporting to a new CO who tells him, in no uncertain terms, that his conduct is borderline at best. The idea was to show that drunken antics and rowdiness will not be tolerated by the Corps. After a lot of haggling, they went along with the idea and added the scene," explains Coulter.

The Great Santini was set at the Marine Corps Air Station at Beaufort, S.C., and both the city and the base provided an enthusiastic reception to the film makers. The script called for scenes with F-4 squadrons from both the Marines and Navy, but only Marine squadrons were available. So VMFA-251 was selected to play the Navy in the film. Painters covered over the word "Marines" and replaced it with "Navy" on the planes appearing on camera, but all other squadron markings, including a distinctive orange "Thunderbolt" (VMFA-251 is nicknamed the Thunderbolt Squadron) were left intact.

The film is set in the years 1962 and 1963, which created some uniform problems — what the Corps wears today is not what they wore then. "It would have been impossible to find enough old uniforms for all the extras that appeared in this film," explains Coulter. "So we exercised a little literary license, which didn't affect the final product much, and which allowed us to use more real Marines as extras." Those that appeared were on leave or pass status from their units, and were paid standard film-extra fees ($78 per day) for their work.

ABOVE: Robert Duvall, as Marine fighter pilot Lt. Col. "Bull" Meecham, prepares F-4 for takeoff in "Great Santini." Actor learned "Marine Way" at Parris Island and Beaufort, S.C. (USMC Air Station where film was shot). LEFT: Maj. Pat Coulter, USMC, gives technical advice to shooting crew on set of "Great Santini," first movie about Marine aviation since 1951. Coulter allowed "literary license" in costuming to permit appearance of off-duty Marines as extras in film, since 1979 uniforms differed from those of early '60s. BELOW: Duvall (right) reports for duty at new station after playing practical joke. USMC asked producers to write in new scene in which CO dresses down flier for rowdiness — to show Duvall's behavior is not typical of Marines aviators. Photos: Orion Pictures

In one scene, Col. Meechum and his family are traveling from Atlanta to Beaufort on change of station, and Meechum wears utilities, bloused boots and a cover, which is and was strictly against regulations. But the script, and the book it is based on, were written by Pat Conroy, son of Marine Lt. Col. (later Col.) Donald Conroy, and includes much accurate biographical material on Col. Conroy, as well as what Coulter describes as "a bunch of the best sea stories Marines have passed around for years."

Since the real Bull Meechum — Col. Conroy — insists that he *did* in fact wear utilities and so forth on the trip to Beaufort, the scene was allowed to be filmed that way. But his aviator's wings and insignia of rank were removed for the film.

Robert Duvall, the gifted actor who stars in *Santini*, had played military men in other films. He was the borderline-psycho air cav squadron commander in *Apocalypse Now* ("I love the smell of napalm in the morning; it's the scent of victory.") and he was Eisenhower in ABC-TV's *Ike*. But although his father is a retired admiral, he had never played an aviator, and he was new to the Corps.

Coulter explains how Duvall was prepped for the role: "We laid on a series of briefings for him with commanders at Parris Island and at the air station. He went to the officers' club and learned how to play 'Dead Bug' (a sort of who-buys-the-drinks game where someone hollers, 'dead bug' and the last one on the floor with arms and legs sticking up buys a round). He even got hosed down with a fire extinguisher at the fighter bar during happy hour.

"On a more serious note, he visited the flight lines and went through flight simulator rides, attended various social affairs at the base and spent a day at the Parris Island Recruit Depot watching the DIs make Marines. He spent time talking to recruits, NCOs and officers.

"But it took Lt. Col. Kiely to make a Marine fighter pilot of Duvall," continues Coulter. "He taught him to talk with his hands, the way pilots do. Kiely was a natural — rugged, distinguished, flamboyant and authoritative. He's always in charge and highly respected by all. Much of the way Duvall plays Santini is a reflection of how he imagined Kiely would react in the same situation.

"Throughout the film," Coulter explains, "the film company went out of its way to do things 'The Marine Way'."

One indication of how thorough the cast and crew's indoctrination was occurred during the shooting of a love scene. In the scene, Duvall and Blythe Danner, who plays Santini's wife, Lillian, entered the set wearing only bathrobes. When everything was ready for shooting, the set was cleared of all nonessential people, and the couple took off their robes and got into a bed. Coulter was still standing by, and as Danner climbed into the bed she turned to him and asked, "Pat, are you here to

make sure we do this the Marine Corps way?"

The Air Force image is as important as "The Marine Way" to Lt. Col. Duncan Wilmore, USAF, whose Los Angeles offices are just down the corridor from the U.S. Army's Public Affairs Office (PAO). Los Angeles, Wilmore explains, is an important Air Force center for high-technology research and development, and several large air bases are within an hour or so of the West Coast metropolis.

The Air Force finds it convenient to split functions among the officers and senior noncoms in its West Coast Public Affairs Office. Motion pictures and TV fall under Wilmore, a fighter pilot by trade — an officer who had "way more" than 100 F-105 missions over North Vietnam. He advised the producers of *Enola Gay*, a TV movie about the plane that dropped the first nuke on the Japanese port city of Hiroshima.

"*Enola Gay* is essentially the story of the 509th Bomb Group, a special unit put together to drop the atomic bomb. In the TV movie, the focus is on Paul Tibbits, the guy who had to put the group together, train 'em, drop the bomb and keep his personal life together, all at the same time," explains Wilmore. "And he was, uh, best out of four. He didn't do such a great job with his personal life.

"The movie was an attempt to show the event, concentrating on the stress on this one man. The film company needed us [the Air Force] primarily for one reason: to find a place to shoot the movie. The Air Force no longer has any B-29s. We no longer have that kind of uniform or anything else from that era. But we do have a base near Tucson, Davis Monthan, which provided the right locale.

"Now, they could have done the same thing at Burbank Airport, but Burbank just doesn't look like Wendover, Utah, where the actual base was during WWII. Davis Monthan just happens to have some WWII buildings left over, and some hangars, and looks like the desert location.

"We let them use the base — but made them change the script."

"We let them use the facility. As you know, whenever we provide support of this kind, the government has to review the script for accuracy and service image, that kind of thing. Primarily accuracy, and that covers a lot of ground. The first draft of *Enola Gay* — there were several whacks taken at a screenplay, based on a book, by other studios, but nothing ever came of them — wasn't very accurate. So, in order to fulfill Viacom's [a production company] request to use Davis Monthan, we felt that these inaccuracies would have to be corrected.

"For example, the basic philosophical thrust of the entire drama would have to be altered. The script was based on a book that, for the purpose of adding drama,

ABOVE: Col. Meecham's plane crashes near end of "Great Santini" and his military funeral ends film. RIGHT: On camera — as the actors see it: here during filming of Col. Meecham's funeral at end of "Great Santini." BELOW: Maj. Coulter (left) indoctrinated cast and crew throughout shooting of "Great Santini" — so much so that, during bedroom scene, actress Blythe Danner asked him, "Pat, are you here to make sure we do this the Marine Corps way?" Photos: Orion Pictures

portrayed Paul Tibbets, one guy, in charge of an organization — he was then a lieutenant colonel — with a considerable amount of authority and latitude. So far, that's true.

"Because of the need for security, and because of the priority of the project, if Tibbets wanted, say, a $6 million increase in his budget, and it was for a good purpose, all he had to do was mention the magic words, 'Silver Plate,' and everybody in the service would just give him what he needed. The book attempted to portray Tibbetts as a guy who faced a lot of resentment from other people in the service who didn't have his kind of priority. People who were trying to take his mission away from him, with an attitude of: 'The project is obviously a high priority and it's in our theater, so why don't we just take this mission over and run it for this young kid.'

WINNING WINGS

Military cooperation with the film-making industry is as old as the Academy Awards — and older than the Oscar. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences gave best-picture honors to *Wings*, a silent production starring, among others, Gary Cooper, Clara Bow and Buddy Rogers, in 1927, the very first year the award was given. The Oscar statuette was not designed until the following year.

In *Wings*, director William "Wild Bill" Wellman saluted his own WWI outfit, the Lafayette Flying Squadron. Because Buddy Rogers was no aviator, the airplane was actually flown — off-camera — by a youngster named Hoyt Vandenberg, who went on to achieve five Air Force stars and have a California Air Force base named after him.

—M.W.

"Specifically, the script said that Gen. Curtis LeMay was one of these guys. They attempted to build a conflict situation. Conflict makes good drama. A conflict between LeMay and Tibbetts was central to the story line. Well, I've talked to Tibbitts, and I've talked to LeMay — at great length. There was no conflict. He knew how important the mission was, and there was mutual support the whole way.

"So," continues Wilmore, "we told them that before we would authorize support, they'd have to change this. Similarly, there was an incident in there about a maneuver performed by the B-29s during the actual bomb mission. In order to drop the bomb and get away safely, the B-29 was forced to make a 155-degree turn and pull about 4 Gs on the plane, *just to get* the hell out of there. This was not something that was normally done by a B-29.

"There was an example in the book that was supposed to show that the rest of the Air Force just didn't understand this maneuver, and so Gen. LeMay demanded

that one of his instructor pilots go up and check out these new kids on the blocks — this special group with their special B-29s. So a guy who later became vice-chief of staff of the Air Force, Gen. Blanchard, then a major, went up with him to check 'em out.

"Ohmigod, you can't do that!"

"In the book, when they demonstrated this 155-degree turn, Blanchard came apart at the seams. 'Ohmigod, you can't do *that*,' he was supposed to have said. He was supposed to have been scared shitless. Well, I know the situation, and I know what really happened, as a result of researching it with Gen. Tibbetts and with LeMay. Nothing like that ever took place.

"So why should we give Blanchard a black eye by making him look like an asshole in a movie, if it never really happened?" asks Wilmore. "So they eventually came about very nicely. There was no problem — after we made the facts quite plain."

Making *Enola Gay* required the use of flyable B-29s, but the Air Force long ago junked or sold its entire fleet. "There were three used, two belonging to the Confederate Air Force [see "SOF Jumps With A Ghost Squadron," SOF, March '79] and the third a museum piece that the film company was able to use," explains Wilmore.

"But then there was the matter of security. We were able to set up a schedule of off-duty air police to guard the aircraft when shooting wasn't going on. The film company paid them for their time.

"In fact, the Air Force billed them [the film company] for everything they required from us, except the use of the base and the buildings, which weren't being used for anything else anyway. We issued them [the film company] passes so they'd have access to the areas of the base they needed, and we extended them all the little courtesies that made the job easier: like waving them through the security gates when they came in or out.

"Where do you get a tractor for a B-29?"

"And then there was a problem with moving the B-29s around on the ground. Where do you get a special tractor big enough to tow one of those planes, and have it available for all the time the planes have to be moved to make a film? Well, just coincidentally, Davis Monthan is the boneyard, or storage area, for the Air Force [see "Bomber Boneyard," SOF, March '80]. We had lots of tugs around to move big airplanes.

"So we rented them what they needed. It cost them $9,000 in towing charges for the convenience of having a couple of military vehicles, with drivers, waiting around for whenever they needed them," says Wilmore.

How military cooperation of the *un*official sort can make a film-maker's task easier is illustrated by an incident which occurred during *Enola Gay*. "Viacom had these rented B-29s from the Confederate Air Force, and the hangup came when they wanted to re-enact the dropping of 'Little Boy,' the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. They had old photos of the bomb, and they built a dummy out of steel — add water for weight. It looked very real, and they planned to actually drop it, with cameras grinding away from different angles.

"You come up with something that works . . . we'll chance it."

"But the standard bomb racks in the B-29 wouldn't accommodate it, and these are the only flyable Super Forts in the world. They came to us and asked for help," says Wilmore. "Now, dropping a bomb is a scientifically precise thing. Before the Air Force lets bombs be dropped, we test them, we wind-tunnel them, we computer-simulate them. We do all sorts of things, because you never know what's going to happen unless you do.

"So I was sort of curious about how they were going to handle this. See, the real *Enola Gay* had a specially built bomb release, which they had tested for months. It's in the Smithsonian, along with the rest of the airplane. Now these movie guys had a big, long bomb that didn't have the same characteristics as the real bomb. So they talked to our bomb guys, but we didn't have anything that would work either.

"There's a real problem here, because these are the last two flying B-29s in the world, and what happens if they make up something that only releases one hook instead of two? Then you'll have this big steel thing jumping around inside the bomb bay — and what if it knocks off the bomb-bay door and the door flies back and hits the horizontal stabilizer or something? Well, we'd lose an airplane and 10 guys!

"The Confederate Air Force was just a little leery about this, but they said, 'Okay, you come up with something that works, and if you can demonstrate that it works three times outside the plane and once while it's in the bomb bay while the ship is on the ground, we'll chance it.'

"So," continues Wilmore, "here's what we did: The Confederate Air Force guys went over to the Air Force storage-and-disposition area, which has some older equipment in it, and they found an old drop-tank pylon off an F-102. It's got the release mechanism so you can punch the tanks off. They took the pylon off and got down to the release mechanism. They figured they could weld a couple of hooks on the bomb to match up to the release.

"We took all this stuff over to the plane where, because it was a B-29, there were always a bunch of young airmen hanging around. Now, in any bunch of GIs you've always got a shade-tree mechanic or two, and there were some guys there from the weapons shop and some from the sheet-metal shop, and they said, 'Let's see what we can do.'

"So it was a little bolt here and a couple of widgets there, and they had made a bomb-release mechanism. They did all this on their own, because they wanted to get involved. We didn't tell them they had to; they just liked to help. That's how GIs are.

"Then we went and tested it: rigged it up to a crane, hung the bomb on the mechanism, lifted the whole thing with a big fork lift and dropped it on some sand bags. Then they pulled the lanyard and, Eureka, it worked. They tried it three times. They put it in the belly of the B-29 and it worked. So the movie guys had a scene.

"We let them use an Air Force bombing range for the actual shot," chuckles Wilmore. "I don't think they would have gotten it if it were not for all these individual airmen, working on their own time, who were just trying to help out."

"They respect us for what we are."

When Wilmore came to his job a year ago, he had some doubts about how the civilians in the movie industry would treat him. "It's been a pleasant surprise. The movie industry spends a lot of money on military films, and they're used to dealing with us as professionals. Some pretty heavy hitters have come to me for support — producers mostly — and it would be easy for me to get a big head, but I know that it's not me, the man, that they're showing so much respect for. It's what I represent — the Air Force — and what it can do for them. So I have to remember that and not go off on an ego trip.

"Some guys tend to forget that, and there are a lot of promises made to guys like us: things like post-retirement jobs. Yet many of those promises are not intended to be taken seriously. Still," adds Wilmore, "there's a lot of mutual respect between the Air Force and the movie industry. Putting together a big film has a lot in common with planning and staging a major military operation — there are the same kind of skills involved. The movie people know this, and they respect us for what we are."

(To be continued.)

Patrick Duffy stars as pilot of "Enola Gay" in NBC's 1980 TV movie. USAF cooperated with film makers and allowed them to use Davis Monthan AFB near Tucson, Ariz., for location. Confederate Air Force provided B-29s for film. Photo: NBC

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6 NEW GUNS, 2 NEW ROUNDS FROM S&W

New 9mms Much Improved

Text & Photos by Matt Fredericks

Author tests new S&W 9mms. All weapons performed well.

While some gun manufacturers are laying off employees and cutting back, S&W continues to grow rapidly. The firm recently introduced four new semiautomatic pistols, two new revolvers and two high-performance handgun ammunition loads. SOF's Matt Fredericks managed to obtain a sample of each and test them extensively.

Model 439/539

FOR those of us who participate in practical pistol shooting, the S&W 9mms have always been a sad example of a defensive pistol. Reliability was possible only with full-metal-jacketed ammunition, while trigger pulls were horrible and accuracy was best described as mediocre. New IPSC shooters who depended on this weapon soon gave up in disgust and bought .45 autos.

Police departments, however, bought these pistols by the gross. Chiefs waxed enthusiastic over them, while armorers cursed them. They often required extensive reworking before they could be issued to the troops.

In all fairness to S&W, the company was aware of these problems and tried to correct them. When originally developed, the Model 39 was made to work with military 9mm ammo and did so quite well. Unfortunately, when high-performance 9mm loads became a reality, reliable feeding went out the window.

The Model 39-2 was introduced to solve this problem, but wasn't a total success due to the wide disparity in 9mm loads. Rim thickness varies considerably, as does overall length of many loaded rounds. Due to continued problems in this area, S&W has introduced its "second generation" 9mms.

The 439/539 series will replace the 39-2. The 439 has an aluminum frame and the 539 is an all-steel offering. Both, however, share a variety of improvements, making them safer and more reliable.

Although it was not a common occurrence, the Model 39 could fire if dropped

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This is Matt Fredericks' second appearance in SOF (see "Deadly Off-Duty Wallop," April '81). Matt Fredericks is the *nom de guerre* of a police officer in a major U.S. city and he is a recognized expert on police *survival*. Fredericks has taught regional seminars and written about street survival for professional police magazines.

We are pleased to welcome Fredericks back for his second visit to SOF's pages and hope it won't be his last.

Bob Poos

with the safety off, an accident that happened often enough to concern S&W. To eliminate this danger, a block that locks the firing pin until the trigger is pulled has been installed.

A shooter using the prototype 439 had to apply the safety and then pull the trigger to drop the hammer. When these early samples were shown to various departments which already carried the Smith 9mms, they expressed concern about the possibility of accidental discharges with such an arrangement. As a result, the weapon was redesigned so that the safety dropped the hammer as before.

The new extractor is much wider and deeper than the original and is made of stainless steel in order to handle both domestic and foreign 9mm offerings. I fired a number of European loads through the Model 439 without a hitch.

The new 9mms are reliable with any commercially available load. I loaded the magazines repeatedly and randomly with a wide variety of offerings, ranging from Super Vel's stubby, 90-grain jhp to Remington's 124-grain full-metal-jacketed load. The gun gobbled them up without a hitch and routinely fed empty cartridges.

The original S&W 9mm's rear sight was adjustable for windage only, and the various high-performance loads rarely shot to point of aim. The new versions have a sight that is not only fully adjustable, but equipped with sheet-metal "wings" to protect coat linings.

The 539 is the 439's equal — with the bonus of extra weight for reduced recoil. While the 9mm can hardly be considered a heavy load, many prefer the additional heft of an all-steel weapon. Furthermore, the steel Smith can be reworked to produce excellent accuracy. Top IPSC competitor Tom Campbell uses a modified 559 that produces 2½-inch groups at 50 yards.

Model 459/559

The 459 and 559 are the 15-shot 9mms with aluminum and steel frames respectively. They share all the design improvements of the 439/539 — plus the increased magazine capacity so popular in police circles. Whether or not one is a fan of the 9mm for defense, these weapons can no longer be criticized for unreliability. They will literally feed anything and produce good accuracy.

Of particular interest to left-handed shooters is the fact that S&W will offer ambidextrous safeties on their new 9mms. These weapons will be available in both blue and nickel and should appear by this summer. The 639 and 659 (stainless steel) are slated for future production, but it will be at least a year before they reach the assembly line.

Model 586

When S&W introduced the concept of a medium-frame .357 magnum (Model 19), it was anticipated that police officers

New steel-frame 9mm S&W Model 559.

S&W Model 547 9mm revolver is shown in three-inch-barrel version.

New "L"-frame .357 Magnum S&W Model 586 revolver.

could practice with .38 wadcutters and restrict magnum loads to duty use. Over the years, however, police training has changed. Police departments that issue .357s have begun to train and practice with .357 ammo. Medium-frame .357s, however, weren't designed for such heavy use. The obvious answer was the "N"-frame .357, but most departments preferred the more lightweight weapon.

S&W's answer to this problem was to develop the new "L"-frame Model 586. Bigger and heavier than the "K"-frame, it is nonetheless substantially lighter than "N"-frame .357s.

It comes in either blue, nickel or stainless steel (Model 686), with a four- or six-inch barrel. It will also be available in a fixed-sight version (581 or 681). This weapon's heavy-barrel feature substantially reduces recoil when compared to a six-inch "K"-frame magnum. It is also impressively accurate. It produces two-inch groups at 50 yards from a Ransom rest, and uses Federal match wadcutters. S&W's own 125-grain jhp .357 load produced excellent three-inch groups at the same distance.

The Model 586 comes with target grips interchangeable with "K"-frame grips so that offerings from Hogue or Pachmayr can easily be installed. While speedloaders have not yet been developed especially for this new weapon, those designed for the Colt Python work perfectly.

The Model 547 9mm revolver was originally designed for the French police. A highly modified Model 13 was the basis for this new weapon. Despite its export potential, I'm convinced it will be highly popular here. Why? Because the 9mm offers a substantial increase in performance over the +P .38 Special in the same barrel lengths. A quick check with a chronograph proves my argument. The results are listed below:

S&W Model 10 (4" Barrel)

a. W-W 95gr jhp	1102 fps
b. W-W 110gr jhp	1023 fps
c. W-W 125gr jhp	1008 fps

S&W Model 547 (4" Barrel)

a. W-W 95gr jsp	1304 fps
b. W-W 100gr jhp	1287 fps
c. W-W 115gr fmj	1178 fps

The Model 547 is a moderate-recoil weapon. It will be an excellent choice for female police officers because of its smaller grip, light recoil and good performance.

The extractor design is unique and has been patented by S&W. It is designed so that if a case rim gets under the extractor, the extractor is strong enough to cut through the rim of the case, allowing the weapon to be used as a five-shot gun. With normal revolver extraction systems, on the other hand, if a case gets under the star of the extractor, the weapon becomes a rather expensive club.

Unlike most of S&W's centerfire revolvers, the Model 547's firing pin is located in the frame rather than the hammer. Below the firing pin is a second pin called the limit pin. Both pins are retained in the weapon by a system similar to that used in the .22 Jet revolver.

The limit pin limits the primer indent and reduces extraction force. Since the 9mm headspaces off the front of the case, a variation in case length can cause a .020 gap at the back of the case between the bolster face and the case. The limit pin prevents excessive penetration of the primer by pushing the hammer back as the shell moves back to the bolster face. The shell casings will often show a mark from the action of the limit pin. If the limit pin is removed, some brands will have as many as five out of six rounds with pierced primers. This piercing will occur at the tip of the firing pin, and the high-pressure gas leak will badly score the firing pin.

Although the hammer does rebound, it doesn't so much that it interferes with rapid fire. Because of its design, the double-action pull is rather heavy, but quite smooth. I've put more than 500 rounds of high-performance 9mm ammo through it without a hitch, and the more I shoot it, the more I like it. This is one gun I don't intend to return!

Along with the new weapons, S&W introduced two new high-performance handgun loads. Both are Nyclad 125-grain hollow-point loads. One—designed for extensive use in airweight snubs—is called "The Chief's Special" load. The other is for the 9mm. I checked both loads for velocity and expansion. My results are listed below:

Load	2" Vel.	2" Exp.	4" Vel.	4" Exp.
a. .38 Special	825fps	.70"	987fps	.79"
b. 9mm	—	—	1134fps	.78"

Both loads are accurate and have minimal muzzle flash. The Nyclad 9mm feeds in all my 9mm pistols despite the fact that it has a pure-lead core. The Nyclad coating has tremendous potential and S&W is planning to offer similar loads in a variety of other calibers. These two loads should be on dealers' shelves by the time this article is in print.

THE JUDAS TREE

Nightmares From Cabanatuan Prison Camp

by Robert V. Larson

"It is written that you should suffer without purpose and without hope, but I will not let all your sufferings be lost in the abyss."

—Georges Duhamel

MANY years have passed and my memories of WWII are vague and fragmented. The people and places that were once an integral part of my life have become distorted like images in a Coney Island mirror. Except when I dream. Then monstrous pictures invade my brain with the cunning of a sniper's bullet, and their horror mounts greedily until, suddenly, the dream peaking, I'm jolted upright, my pajamas adhesive with sweat.

Dixie, my wife, awakens instantly, flicks on the bedlamp and draws me to her as I shudder and gasp for breath. "Oh, honey," she murmers and gently strokes my back. "Was it the *tree*, again?" I nod and move reluctantly from her. I need her closeness desperately, but I cannot let her be polluted by the creatures that are grudgingly leaving my body. They're still dangerous. Later, over coffee and a cigarette — despite my wife's intentionally distractive chatter — my mind is sucked helplessly into the cauldron of the past....

Corregidor fell on 6 May 1942, and a fortnight after that bewildering event, we prisoners-of-war were herded onto Japanese fishing boats which took us to Manila. There was a humiliating march up Dewey Boulevard to old Bilibid prison where we spent the night. The following day we marched to Tutuban station where we boarded boxcars which carried us to Cabanatuan, the dusty provincial capital of Nueva Ecija. That wet night we slept in a schoolyard, and early the next morning began an 18-kilometer march eastward to Military Prison Camp No. 3, a former Philippine Army training base, located in the empty foothills of the Sierra Madre.

The camp, with its neat rows of thatch-roofed huts, could have exhibited to the uninitiated a sort of rough, tropical glamour, but while the huts were actually no worse than the occasional *nipa* shack encountered on rare outside details, they were still flagrantly inadequate.

6 May 1942: American flag is lowered on Corregidor after Japanese capture. Photo courtesy of Dr. Diosdado M. Yap, Editor-Publisher, BATAAN Magazine, Washington, D.C.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Master Sgt. Robert V. Larson, USAF (ret.), served as a rifleman with the Naval Beach Defense Battalion at Fort Mills, Corregidor, in the Philippines from the beginning of WWII until 6 May 1942, when he was taken prisoner by the Japanese. He was incarcerated in various camps in the Philippines, and then, in July 1944, was sent to Japan where he worked for the duration of the war in coal mines.

Since then, he has been NCOIC of the Special Activities Section, 405th Air Police Squadron at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, serving from 1960 to 1962.

He served as historian with the 806th Air Division at Chennault AFB, La., and later in the same capacity with the 319th Bomb Wing, Grand Forks AFB, N.D.

Larson retired from the Air Force in 1963. He has a 100-percent disability rating due to brain damage incurred as a POW. The damage has caused him to have difficulty dealing with abstractions.

"I had to give up the idea of becoming a physicist and concentrate instead on a writing career," Larson told us. We think it was a good choice.

If he had his life to live over again, Larson said, "I'd be either a gardener or a burglar — both quiet occupations."

—John Metzger

Thatch, although rainproof, can be a sanctuary for rats. And we had them: gaunt creatures, with evil, naked faces. Also, the plaited *swali* walls hid hordes of bedbugs whose nocturnal preying made sleep fitful and unrewarding. The double-decked sleeping platforms were nailed over dirt floors which became sumps when the long rains came. The few latrines were foul beyond belief and failed to meet our needs even before dysentery began ripping through the camp. There was no lighting of any kind, and we learned quickly at Camp 3 that our captors regarded night as a time for sleep, period.

Food became an overriding obsession. Some men, their minds altered by hunger, tortured themselves by spending their days conceiving, and then laboriously writing down, post-liberation recipes, which they proceeded to read aloud with all the fervor of a fundamentalist sermon.

The recipes, written on the backs of Alpine condensed-milk labels, were alike in one respect: they all called for an inordinate amount of sugar, chocolate and sweetened condensed milk. Most of the gastronomical fantasies that were put to paper were downright awful. But at that time, you must understand, we were enthralled by such culinary outrages as, for example, chocolate-chip hashbrowns and sweet-and-sour liver and onions.

Naturally, we were jolted rudely back to reality each time we waited in the chow line. An artillery man summed it up quite succinctly: "Never," he said dourly, "have so many waited so long for so little." Day after day our resentful stomachs were subjected to a diet of glutinous rice and, on occasion, a greens soup, both liberally laced with worms, rat shit and unidentifiable miscellanea.

We joked about it: "How in hell could you chip your tooth on this swill?"

Ruefully: "Aw, I bit down on a rat turd, and it turned out to be a rock." Laughter.

Humor was of the gallows type: crude and mostly scatalogical. I can't recall any sexual jokes. Starvation had so reduced our sex drive that Betty Grable could have lain naked next to a can of spam without risking her virtue. That she would have been trampled to death in the stampede to get at the spam was, of course, an accepted hypothesis.

One evening, about a week after our arrival, the camp commander, Col. Mori, read us the riot act, in which he ordered us sternly not to escape. He was a wispy, myopic man — the colonel — as ugly as a cold sore and with the personality of a viper. His features were permanently set in a sour expression, reminiscent of a gray-flannel-clad commuter who has just missed the last train to a distant suburb.

"You must not escape!" he shrilled. "If you escape, you were be shot to die . . . by gun!" His English was deplorable, but the message was clear and, two days later, it was brought forcibly home to us when four teenage GIs stood in a mass grave and were shot by a firing squad (which thriftily collected their brass before marching off). It was a brutal price to pay for only 58 minutes of freedom, and the single consoling thought that comes to mind is that for 58 minutes they were soldiers again.

Our guards were repellent little men, clad in shabby, gray-green uniforms. They seemed to dart rather than walk, and they wore their rifles — Corregidor Marines did that — instead of merely lugging them, a sure sign that they were veterans. They were devoted equally to plunder and masturbation, and they cultivated cruelty as assiduously as roues cultivated virgins. Their days, as far as I could tell, were totally devoid of any of life's redeeming graces, which was reflected by the grunts, shrieks and bellows they employed when communicating with us.

On outside details we were often confused by their contradictory rantings. Then, sadly, there would be instant tutoring in basic Japanese which, more often than not, included a concurrent lesson in orthopedic psychology.

Rifle butts and pick-axe handles were their favorite training aids, and had Miss Agnes Kunze, my third-grade teacher, been free to utilize them, instead of merely rapping my grimy, ink-stained knuckles with a ruler, she would not have had to report to my parents that I was a "slow learner." Indeed, under the malevolent tutelage of the guards, my ability to speedily absorb knowledge reached orbital heights, along with my instinct for survival. Fortunately for us, the guards seldom came inside the camp. From the beginning to the end of our captivity we avoided them as much as possible.

Physically, we were a collective mess. One contributing factor was the debilitating exhaustion which always accompanies defeat. That, and the five pre-captive months on three-eighths rations had lowered resistance to a point where even the most innocuous scratch became a

American prisoners of war under guard by Japanese troops with Arisaka rifles after surrender of Bataan, April 1942. Photo courtesy of Dr. Diosdado M. Yap, Editor-Publisher, BATAAN Magazine, Washington, D.C.

bone-deep ulcer. There were no drugs, and it was not uncommon to see men make no effort to remove the maggots that covered their wet sores. They only ate dead tissue, or so it was rumored.

Beri-beri showed up. "Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables," the doctors wryly told the men who hobbled to sick-call on grossly swollen ankles, who, in turn, would stare long and pointedly at the doctors and then limp away, distributing turgid fragments of obscenity as they left.

We had a variety show and a grubby little rifleman brought down the house with his portrayal of "Tizzie Lish," a radio comedian of that era who was famous for his outlandish recipes. "Now, folksies [this in a screechy falsetto], I'm going to tell you how to make rice balls. First, you take a pound of rice and soak it in the latrine for half an hour . . . I'll wait for you. . . ."

It was all very crude — verbal slapstick, really — but exhausted spectres in filthy khaki slapped their sides and cackled delightedly. For some it was their last hearty laugh, for scant days later they were dead from dysentery, malaria or a combination of both.

Just about that time, a hospital was activated across the road from the main camp. A call for volunteer medics had gone out previously and six of us had been selected. I never bothered to ask the others why they volunteered; it wasn't important. But as far as I was concerned, it was simple: I was bored and wanted a change. It was a change to be sure, but for the worse, and whatever youthful innocence I may have retained was soon to be irretrievably lost.

None of us knew why we had been selected. "Because we were warm, breathing and available," one kid suggested later. It certainly wasn't as if we possessed medical skills. None of us knew a femur from a fistula — nor a hernia from a hamstring, for that matter.

However, all of us, at one time or another, had been painfully and personally familiar with the symptoms and treatment of an affliction transmitted through intimate association with members of the oldest profession. This hardly qualified us to be medics, even instant ones, "but hell," we told each other, "it's better than nothing. At least we know where to stick in a needle."

And we knew how to stop the maddening itch caused by what the military euphemistically referred to as "infectious mites." "Put on that old blue ointment," we used to sing. I recall that a machinist mate once told me how to get rid of the crabs. We were drinking in the New Palais Cabaret, on Blood Alley, in prewar Shanghai. "Just rub on some alcohol and sand," he said. "They'll get drunk and stone each other to death."

"Very interesting," an old constabulary surgeon said, dryly, during an interview in which we paraded our knowledge of carnal diseases. "But there won't be much call for that sort of expertise here." He was a small man, trim, even in knocked-about khaki. He had the lean face and deep-set eyes seen only in the priesthood and the military. An old timer, I thought, a regular. The old surgeon manufactured a flinty smile. "But you'll get plenty of on-the-job training," he said. "Dismissed."

Hospital And Judas Tree

The hospital — formerly officers' quarters — consisted of four wooden huts with windows (no glass) and real hardwood floors. There was a kitchen hut, and a bath house equipped with cold-water faucets and floored with gravel. The latrine was new and stood on a slope off by itself. It smelled of pine and fresh earth, and there was a stout sack of lime in one corner. Fifty yards above it, silhouetted by an indifferent sky and an occasional ambling cloud, rose the *tree*. I paid no attention to it at the beginning. It was simply there — like our hunger.

We became operational when the doctor arrived. He was a tall, quietly irreverent captain in his mid-30s, with the appearance of a man-about-town who had fallen on hard times and was gamely making the best of it. Faded, coarsely patched suntans hung from his bony frame with all the style and panache of a tent flap. His shoes were decrepit, pulpy wrecks with more holes than substance, and laced with twine. They hinted strongly at a previously carefree existence on fairway greens and 18th holes. The absurd GI sun helmet he wore was dented and frayed around the rim, but it was at a cocky, go-to-hell angle, and he jauntily waved a long, bamboo cigarette-holder when he spoke. His irreverence didn't quite mask his concern for the patients. He fought to save lives as if he were waging a holy war. He was a good man and we liked him.

Medical Kit

His complete medical kit, as I recall, consisted of a Listerine bottle half-full of opium powder, a messkit knife that doubled as a scalpel and two mangled rubber tubes with a fleck of chrome at one end which he identified as a stethescope. He owned a cast-iron skillet, a leaky can-

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PRISONERS OF WAR

It would be impossible to embellish or exaggerate the inhuman treatment of Allied prisoners of war who fell into the hands of the Japanese in WWII.

After 14 weeks on the mountainous peninsula of Bataan, 76,000 American and Filipino troops surrendered to the Japanese. It was the largest capitulation by a United States military command in history. One month later, 13,000 defenders on Corregidor gave up their precarious island position at the entrance to Manila Bay. The fall of the Philippines was complete.

Surrender began a nightmare that those who survived imprisonment would try to forget for the rest of their lives. The captured Corregidor defenders were eventually shipped by train to a camp at Cabanatuan — a week-long trip during which the prisoners were given no food.

The defenders of Bataan, however, suffered a worse fate. The Japanese had expected to deal with about 25,000 healthy troops. When confronted with almost three times that number — many sick and starving — food and supplies ran short. The Japanese regarded surrender as an unforgivable offense to dignity, and the prisoners suffered for it.

During the 65-mile march north to Camp O'Donnell, over 7,000 prisoners were killed or left to die in their tracks from hunger, thirst and disease. Some 350 Filipino troops were bayoneted and beheaded during the first part of the journey. Japanese guards would force captives to bury their incapacitated comrades alive — men who watched helplessly as their own graves were dug.

Once the emaciated army reached Camp O'Donnell, up to 400 died daily from disease and starvation. By the end of two months' captivity at Cabantuan, over 2,000 Americans had died.

The Japanese maintained at least 17 camps similar to Cabanatuan and O'Donnell in the Philippines. Others included Bilibid, Cabu, Canacao, Cebu, Davao, Ft. Mills, Palawan and Santo Tomas Internment Camp.

Men went insane. Many remained mad, although others recovered their sanity. Most prisoners deteriorated, but a few seemed to thrive under the same conditions. It was not an example of what today's college professors call applied psychology. It was humanity in the raw. —John Metzger

BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos

Continued from page 4

map. Write to Defense Mapping Agency, Office of Distribution Services, Washington, DC 20315. Checks should be made out to the Treasurer of the United States.

ANNUAL REUNION NOTES . . .

The 14th annual reunion of "Gamewardens of Vietnam Assn., Inc." will be held in Norfolk, Va., Aug. 15.

"Gamewardens" was formed in 1968 and is composed of men who served in River Patrol Task Force 116, Operation Gamewarden, from 1966 to 1971 in Vietnam's Mekong Delta. It is incorporated as a non-profit, tax-exempt veterans' organization.

"Gamewardens" offers an annual $250 scholarship to an eligible high-school senior planning to enter college. Lifetime dues are $30 and yearly $3. The association erected a monument in memory of the River Patrol Force at the Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base near Norfolk last year and plans another for a West Coast location in 1982.

For further information write: YNCS John C. Williams, USN, P.O. Box 5523, Virginia Beach, VA 23455.

VN BOOK REPORT . . .

Thomas W. Hebert, of Collinsville, Conn., has established a monthly publication he calls the *Vietnam Book Report Newsletter.*

But it's more than just a newsletter reporting on books of interest to Viet vets. The eight- to 16-page publication also contains a column on Viet vets in the news, movie reviews, notes on unit reunions, commentary and other items of interest to those who served in Vietnam.

For further information write: Vietnam Veterans, Newsletter/Booklists/Bookstore, P.O. Box 122, Collinsville, CT 06022.

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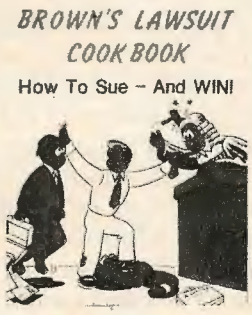

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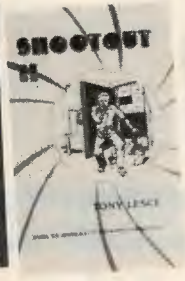

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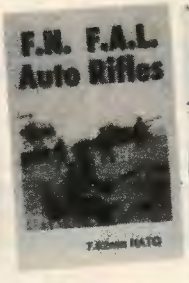

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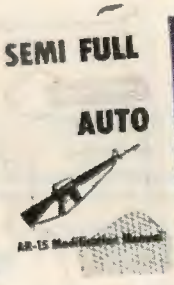

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YEARN MG

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he'll ship the weapon to your dealer. At this point, the procedure for transferring the weapon to you is the same as if he had it in stock originally.

When you take delivery of your machine gun, it'll be up to you to stay legal with it. You must receive federal approval (NFA Branch) before transporting it across state lines (ATF-Form 7560.8); temporarily transferring tax-free to a FFL dealer (gunsmith, and not necessarily a Class III) for repair if you do not remain with the machine gun (ATF-Form 5); keeping the weapon under your control at all times (storage, no loaning to friends etc.); and you should notify NFA of any address changes. You'll be responsible for complying with all the laws, rules and regulations of each locality where you might wish to carry your gun. It's your job to find out — in advance — what these laws are. The judge won't take "I didn't know it was against the law...." as an excuse.

If your application has been properly completed, if your fingerprints are acceptable and if there is nothing in your background to prevent you from legally owning a machine gun, your application will — most likely — be approved. You can expect to wait about six weeks after your dealer submits your application before you receive word.

What to do with all that time while your

application is being processed? I would suggest buying a *lot* of ammo and learning how to reload.

JUDAS TREE

Continued from page 71

vas bucket and a copy of *God's Little Acre* with the middle torn out. Later, he told me that he found the pages from that book far superior for rolling cigarettes than those from the *New Testament*, a copy of which we had all been given when the war began.

I didn't smoke the *New Testament*, myself. Although I wasn't particularly religious, I believed fervently in hedging all bets at that stage of my life. So I continued to roll my cigarettes with Japanese-issue toilet paper or, in a pinch, smoked the horrid, green-tipped cardboard tubes that our captors pressed on us. We called them "Green-Deaths." "A Purple Heart with every drag," a Marine gunney wheezed.

Patients began to arrive on crude, makeshift litters. They were hairy men mostly, all in rags — many of whom shook violently — whose eyes, dulled by fever, pleaded mutely for the quinine we didn't have. We could do nothing but cool their shaggy heads with water, needle them into eating their *lugao* (rice gruel) and watch them die.

And they died, quietly, in droves, on the bare wooden floors of the snug little huts. Then we would carry them outside to a common site and cover them with their shelter-halves, tucking the edges securely beneath them, according them in death the dignity they had not known in their last earthly days. Ironically, several litter bearers joined them when they collapsed and died after transporting patients. In one instance, a bearer died and the patient recovered.

Those with dysentery lay in their own shit, and they jerked and twisted as searing cramps tore through their bellies. The opium powder was a godsend — it relieved cramps — but it lasted for only a few days. With no medicine, we worked even harder to make the patients as comfor-

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FLAK

Continued from page 6

or the ridiculous Japanese Nambu 94.

In an army that sets little or no store by small arms of any sort, a type change for the worse is embarrassing, but hardly significant. As the French general put it, "The situation is desperate but not serious."

We have had several gold-plated fighter pilots here at Gunsite who, sensibly from their standpoint, sought the best available pistol training in order to possibly survive a bailout. The Air Force gave them none at all, so it is obviously immaterial whether or not the U.S. pistol is good, mediocre or poor.

Personally I rather favor the Victorian policy of letting an officer procure, maintain and train with the pistol of his choice. It saves a bit of the taxpayers' money and it tends to promote superior ordnance. At least those men who know will carry the best available sidearm, and those who don't will be no worse off than with an issue weapon.

When you ask what you may do to abort the error contemplated by the DOD, I suggest propaganda concentrating on thrift. It will cost a great deal of money to make the change, and at this point we are collectively dedicated to saving money and eliminating waste. It is quite true that the pistol we have is infinitely better than the one proposed as its replacement — witness the last World Practical Pistol Championships — but we should not try to enlighten those who have already proved that they do not understand pistolcraft.

Let us preach ECONOMY. Shout, "Don't waste our money on unnecessary busywork! There are more important ways to spend it." *The bureaucrats will only resent you if you tell them that they are stupid, but they just may listen if you suggest a way in which they may appear wise and thrifty. Especially just now. Go forth and preach! I will help.*

PARATROOPERS OF THE NORTH ...

Sirs:

At last a way to fight the cancerous Soviet threat! The Afghan Freedom Fighters' Fund has given us the opportunity to — at least indirectly — support the fight against the Soviet goal of world domination. This $63 contribution is our way of saying we disapprove of the "look-the-other-way" policy that the bungling political higher-ups have adopted in this country. Besides, it's nice to see somebody putting a boot in the ass of Mother Russia! Keep up the

good coverage of today's really important news.

Sincerely,
Paratroopers of the North:
Robert Brown, Craig Boully, Ken Wodecker, Fred Lovelace, Scott Reddick, Jim Richardson, Rick McFarland, Morris Kelley, Ken Noel, Mike Skibyak, Paul Kempf, D.R. Klein, Ron Cook, Andy Anderson

POWs IN ANGOLA ...

Sirs:

I have been an avid reader of and subscriber to SOF since the first issue. Going through some past issues, I came across your coverage of the Angolan civil war of 1976. An ill-equipped force of around 100 British mercenaries and a few Americans were hastily recruited and met disaster. A number were killed, wounded or captured, and some were executed by their psychotic commander. Of those captured, three Brits and one American — Daniel Gearhart — were executed by the newly formed communist government. The others were given long prison sentences, including two Americans — Gus Grillo and Gary Acker.

Are these men still languishing in prison and, if so, has any attempt been made to free them? Can anything be done to help? The newly elected Reagan administration is going to investigate reports that many American POWs are still held prisoner from the Korean and Vietnam Wars. What about our POWs in Angola?

Sincerely,
Jeffrey K. Myers
Whiting, Indiana

Gary Acker's family with their attorney have been working to obtain their son's release for five years. Congressman Robert K. Dornan (R-Calif.) has been active in trying to obtain Acker's release. Dornan is now on the House Foreign Relations subcommittee.

If anyone has any information regarding government involvement with recruiting or transporting the Americans to Angola, he may contact the editors at SOF and we will relay this information to a family representative. The State Department still maintains that the men went over to Angola "on their own," and refuses to try to get them out. — The Eds.

JUDAS TREE

Continued from page 75

table as possible. It was difficult, however, as they had only their shelter-halves between them and the floor. Still, we washed dozens of fetid haunches, scrubbed floors, carried rations, filled canteens and, most important, I think, stayed with those who were going to die.

But for every dying man we tended, there were three or four outside the huts, unattended. They had retained their mobility — dying on their feet — and some fell dead on the blood-flecked paths that led to the latrine, now unspeakably liquescent. Others, half-demented by pain, reeled endlessly around the compound, halting only to sink to the ground, and then, after a moment, literally clawed themselves to their feet, only to drop in another place. They were seeking, you see, that blessed plot where pain was endurable and where hope could then replace despair. But death found them instead.

Inevitably, the dead soon outnumbered the living. Some perished because they could not endure the daily uncertainty of Japanese captivity, never conducive to longevity. Death in diverse forms — all unsavory — waited hungrily, while liberation in those early days was little more than a faint abstraction on the far horizon and, as such, too nebulous to sustain them. Chance, that blindly fickle equation, played the ultimate role, a factor that their tidy, logical minds would not accept. So they willed themselves to die.

Craftily, without our knowledge, they traded their rations for tobacco, and by that mundane act committed themselves to eternity. After a few days they disappeared, and we sought them out. And we found them: under the huts, behind the kitchen and coiled grotesquely beneath the bathhouse tubs, each wasted body a mute affidavit to hopelessness and pain.

The long rains began: intermittently at first, and then, gathering strength, changing into a steady, monotonous downpour which made all living things seek shelter. The sun was obscured for days on end and, on the rare occasions when the rain lifted — to catch its breath, I always thought — a gray, purgatorial fog settled over the area like a soiled shroud. A patient would catch a chill and then pneumonia would claim him. Men began to die from a particularly virulent type of diphtheria. A medic died, and then another, and once I found the Doc alone, behind the bathhouse, weeping and kicking savagely at the ground.

One blustery night, two of us stayed awake and, by the light of a pilfered candle, kicked and flailed at rats which had chewed through the floor of the hut and were circling the inert forms of delirious men.

"Oh, you bastards!" we panted, stomping wildly. "Can't you wait? You'll chow down soon enough." The rats scattered, squeaking crossly, chiding us for disrupting their feral rites. They challenged us throughout the long night, but we stayed on our toes (literally), and nothing happened.

When dawn finally came, the rain stopped briefly, the rats vanished to wherever rats vanish to and we left the hut trembling with exquisite relief. Candlelight does have a way of distorting shadows. Several nights later, while I slept, a rat gnawed one of my toenails to the quick. It also ate the damned candle.

We were still subsisting on meager sludges of *lugao* three times a day, and hunger had affected our posture and gait: when we stood, we stooped over; and when we walked, it was slowly and jerkily — like mechanical toys whose parts were winding down.

I remember a guy on a truck-driving detail who was willing to part with a can of sardines for five Japanese "Mickey Mouse" (occupation) pesos, an enormous sum in those days. Doc whistled when he heard the cost. "If I ever pay that much for a can of fish," he said, "I'd want to fuck it first." Obscenity was not Doc's bag, and his sexual proclivities did not include dead fish, but malnutrition was tampering with our thought processes, and speech had become coarse and untidy.

Doc bought the sardines, however, and everyone but me had a taste. I had infectious hepatitis and food, even sardines, was anathema to my addled stomach.

Men continued to die in wholesale lots at Cabanatuan. Their diseases were varied and exotic and would have astounded a pathologist and then driven him, muttering, to the bottle. The primary catalysts were, of course, starvation and its old ally, exhaustion. The stench of death hung heavily over the compound, turning our stomachs — one never gets used to it — and Doc exclaimed grumpily, "If the world ever needs an enema, this would be an ideal place to insert the tube."

There was an unforgettable chaplain, pocked with ulcers and twitchy with fever, who visited the hospital from Camp 1, declaring before he left that he wanted to meet Colonel Mori's parents. When asked why, he replied, tightly, "I'd like to marry them."

One Sunday morning I stood in the doorway of a hut and stared dully out across the compound. The burial details were behind in their work, and an uneven row of dead lay half-submerged in muddy pools. They looked diminished and very defenseless against the rain, which beat on them with galactic fury, as if nature itself was determined to erase all signs of anguish from their pinched blue faces.

"Pity," Sir Francis Bacon once wrote, "is the tenderest of affections." But whatever it was that touched me, it made me want to go to them from the shelter of the hut and ease those contorted features and stiffened limbs — as if to prove by gestures how very sorry I was. But I didn't move.

POWs abhor rain, and I would have

BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos

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BATF GUNS BURGLED . . .

The National Rifle Assn.'s *Reports From Washington* informs its readers that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms museum in Washington was robbed of five guns during a daylight burglary.

The five weapons — three pen guns, a derringer and a Mauser machine pistol — were put on public display only a few hours before the burglary. A federal security officer assigned to the area was away from his post when thieves broke open a glass display case and scooped up the guns.

A BATF spokesman said all of the firearms had been rendered inoperable prior to being put on display.

AFGHAN MONEY RAISED . . .

SOF reader John P. McLaughlin of Summerdale, Ala., writes to say that he enjoys Bulletin Board. "The January, 1981, Bulletin Board under 'SOF: New Report From Afghanistan' was very good and I hope that SOF can continue to help the Afghan Freedom Fighters even more."

McLaughlin also sent SOF a clipping from a newspaper reporting that Oregon State Senator Tom Hartung recently turned over to one of the Afghan groups a check for $10,000 raised in Portland, Ore., to purchase food and medicine.

Hartung is quoted as saying the check, presented about 2 February from the Portland-area American Aid for Afghans, is from "the only group in the U.S. dedicated to helping Afghan freedom fighters expel Soviet invaders."

SOF is glad that the Oregonians have taken an interest in the matter, but we were doing the same thing long before 2 February.

VIET VETS HONORED . . .

In response to Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn's grant of lifetime passes for all Major and Minor League games to the recently released 52 Americans held hostage in Iran for more than a year, the Hawaii Islanders of the Pacific Coast League have similarly honored all Vietnam vets living in Hawaii.

The Islanders, a San Diego Padres farm club, have dedicated their 1981 season to the Vietnam vet and are granting complimentary general-admission tickets to all Vietnam vets living in Hawaii. According to the Veterans' Administration, of the 2.7 million Americans who served in Vietnam, some 33,000 live in Hawaii.

Islanders' General Manager Dave Pierson, who made the announcement before Honolulu's Downtown Exchange Club, said: "Though everyone is proud of these Americans [the hostages] who performed their duties so well under difficult circumstances, there is a continued concern by some Americans about the long-overdue recognition of the Vietnam veteran, who also served our country with courage, honor and valor, and has never been welcomed as befitting those who sacrificed so much for all of us in time of war."

Pierson went on to add that, while he realized that, as a baseball team, the Islanders' gesture is "a modest one," he hoped that with the help of the press, others would follow their example.

gotten dangerously soaked. With their earthy GI pragmatism, they would have accepted the thought for the deed. "Don't sweat the small stuff," they most likely would have said.

From the main side, a long gust of wind brought the crackle of a bugle sounding Divine Services. I stood there dejectedly and tried to console myself by thinking that the dead were now supposed to be gloriously happy. Somehow, it didn't comfort me.

Then an incredible thing happened. We began to find many of the dysentery patients on top of the hill, dead beneath the *tree*. They had crawled there, spurred by some wondrous inner strength, inexorably drawn to that spot like lemmings to the sea. The tree was generous — it received them all — and in its shade they shed their mouldering rags and died. They, at least, had found beauty in their final moments, I thought. And the view from the huts below was one of serene beauty: a lone tree on a hill, surrounded by high grass which bowed sedately before it in the wind.

Days passed, and we continued to drag still more bodies from the hill. I found myself fascinated by the tree's effect on dying men. One morning, I stood at a window and routinely scanned the hill for corpses. The sun was shining for the moment, and I saw clearly that there were none. Relieved, I turned away, and then quickly turned back and peered closely at the tree. I could have sworn that I had seen buds glistening on the tree's branches.

The birth of anything on that barren plot was an event, and I left the hut and climbed painfully up the hill. At the top, I paused to catch my breath and, as my panting subsided, a loud humming filled my ears. I ignored it and closed on the tree. Its shade enveloped me, and I was suddenly aware of really seeing it for the first time. Horrified, I turned away, sick and trembling.

It was a savage caricature, an evil mutant thing, a Judas tree. A generation before, an American poet had written of a classic tree that had drawn sustenance from the earth's sweet flowing breast, but this abomination had sucked all the filth and corruption from the camp into its roots. Its trunk was the shade and texture of a toad's skin, and oozing from it were rivulets of inky slime. From its branches thrust spiky, stunted leaves, the exact color of a mourning wreath. How appropriate, I thought bitterly and, cursing, I turned and lashed out at the wretched thing.

"You son of a bitch!" I screamed. "You tricked them. You tricked the guys who came here to die. And you tricked me, too!" Then another appalling dimension was added. The buds *moved*. They were, in fact, enormously swollen blowflies that rose by the thousands and, humming their ghoulish invitation, probed savagely at my eyes and mouth. Howling, I fled from the hill.

But the tree had won. Betrayal by humans is not uncommon, but to be 20 and betrayed by nature is a traumatic thing. Never again would I ever accept anything for what it seemed — I survived the war because of it, but at a frightful cost. The men who died in the tree's mendacious embrace had lost the world, but I had lost the brightness from my soul.

Had anyone asked me then how all those men had died, I would have probably answered, "starvation." But the singular truth of the matter is that they died from the same strain of bureaucratic indifference that is plaguing the defense establishment now. Our unpreparedness when we entered WWII is documented in many books and official reports, a grim reminder ignored by those who would promote total welfare over total readiness. Yet history proves that no total-welfare state has ever survived for long.

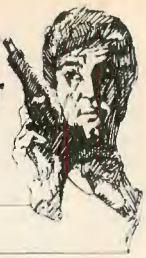
"Those who deny history," the philosopher Santayana warned, "are doomed to relive it in the future." And if Disraeli said that war was too important to be left to the generals, then, conversely, peace is too important to be left to the politicians, some of whom don't know their collective asses from a hot rock.

The tragedy lies in the fact that no one today really listens to those who should be respected, preferring instead to listen to those who are merely notorious. Movie stars, after all, are infinitely more glamorous than generals and admirals, historians and philosophers — all of whom, as every draft resister knows, are crusty, reactionary old bastards.

Some time ago, I happened to glance at a brochure that featured inscribed desk plaques. The inscription on one was so pertinent that I was impelled to copy it. It read: "War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things; the decayed and degraded state of morale and patriotic feeling that thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing he cares about more than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of men better than himself."

Amen, brother.

COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT



Ken Hackathorn

Continued from page 8

his moves and react to danger. He must be able to identify the target, fire accurate, aimed shots at it and use his cover to protect himself from personal injury.

A realistic practical-shooting program should devote time to teaching students first to seek cover and then how to use it skillfully. Farnam has developed an extremely useful method to help officers get maximum benefit from cover. He places an improvised barricade or a vehicle where the student can quickly reach it for cover and a series of friend-and-foe targets downrange. (See also "Langley Personal Safety Course," p. 22, for further details about Farnam's program.)

The student must neutralize all hostile targets. (When a Duelatron-II target is hit, it will pivot away — as long as the hit is centered for a good disabling shot.) His only score is the total elapsed time he was exposed while identifying or firing at targets. The man with the shortest exposure time is the day's top gun. Farnam's system utilizes some critical street-survival methods, including fast identification of targets, careful use of cover and fast, accurate use of the sidearm.

Departments and agencies, already skilled in marksmanship instruction, can — with the aid of Farnam's Duelatron-II training system — add a new and badly needed teaching technique to their courses which will help protect the street cop. By occasionally replacing a qualification session with a training class of this sort, rank-and-file officers will be able to better confront problems relating to their everyday survival. Give a man a work-training session in which he can see genuine benefits to his on-the-job survival, and you will be surprised how well he takes to it.

Departments or agencies interested in this concept should contact John Farnam, Dept. SOF, Defense Training Inc., Rt. 2, Box 207A, Elroy, WI 53929.

INTRODUCING practical cover as an IPSC shooting-program tactic is more difficult. We have seen it used skillfully in the past but, more often than not, the competitors compromise the ideal in their desire to beat the system. Most IPSC shooters do not care about combat logic; they prefer to win the match.

In a number of events, we have seen the use of the "Rhodesian Wall," a device which forces contestants to shoot from cover while using only one hand. More than once, we have seen both top-level and regular competitors hold the rope in their weak hand and swing to the weak side of the barricade to shoot with the strong hand, negating the obstacle's purpose — which is to force the shooter to use his weak hand, since he exposes his entire body while shooting cross-armed.

Thus, the contestant compromises cover in order to benefit from the use of his stronger hand. Some people scream to high heaven when combat logic is included as part of practical shooting and prefer the sport to be a carnival event. We will not debate the merits of their arguments here, but the fact is that — with some research — we can come up with a system of scoring IPSC events fairly, yet still test a contestant's tactical skill when firing from cover. The process is quite simple.

Take a standard exercise match such as the Los Alamitos Pistol Match. At each stage, have the competitor start behind cover of an improvised barrier, such as an old 55-gallon drum or a barricade laid sideways to form a waist-high wall. Starting completely hidden from the target, the shooter must engage the target on signal — and his time exposed from cover while firing will be recorded. While he's behind cover, the clock will be stopped.

In the Los Alamitos Match, the 25-yard stage is fired from a barricade. However, the usual 10-second time limit per string is replaced by recording the time exposed while firing. At the end of the match, the targets are scored in the usual manner, but the total accumulated time of exposure while firing is subtracted from competitor's point score. The winner will be a good shooter who uses minimal time firing while exposed. The contestant who takes too much time firing but still gets a high score will be penalized for his delay. The poorer shooter who shoots quickly but uses cover to his advantage will not be penalized by the time element.

The winning combination is to shoot quickly and accurately with minimal body exposure — both on the street and in matches. This means the timekeeper's job becomes critical. It requires a skilled stop-watch operator and careful monitoring of the shooter's exposed positions.

Practical shooting has always experimented to find the best way to solve problems that accurately reflect real conditions in a defensive shooting encounter. We can now go further and try to develop practical-shooting skills that truly reflect the spirit of the practical pistol. The concept of scored events that reward the sane use of cover will give a fresh approach to future IPSC shooting events.

No one concept or system is the answer, but each step helps us understand the full role of the defensive sidearm and its utility in a modern and sometimes violent society.

PERSONAL SAFETY, INC.

KEN HACKATHORN and ANDY LANGLEY are teaching courses in Personal Safety at the Chapman Range in Columbia, Missouri.

For information send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Personal Safety, Inc., P.O. Box 7035, Columbia, Missouri 65201.

ANGOLA

Continued from page 41

four-engined plane several years ago, and that he would get $35,000 from Savimbi for our illegal flight into Angola.

"Sometimes we earn it," he said with a tight smile.

At 0900, we taxied out onto the runway, cleared on a false flight plan to an African city not far from the Angolan frontier. The DC-4 lumbered down the runway, picked up speed and soon was airborne. Within a few minutes, the capital faded from sight. The unpressurized plane flew at an altitude of 3,000 feet. Beneath us there was nothing but an endless succession of oily rivers, snaking their way through the green carpet of the jungle.

The deep-throated roar of the engines made conversation impossible. There was nothing to do, so I slept fitfully, dreaming of home. Seven hours later, we changed course abruptly and descended to 1,500 feet. From the sun's position, I could tell we were flying west. At that low altitude, the groaning DC-4, chasing its shadow across the ground, seemed to be speeding through the air like a jet. The Portuguese copilot came back and pointed toward the ground.

"Angola," he shouted through hands cupped against the engines' roar. He flashed what would have been a brilliant smile had he enjoyed a full

complement of teeth, and gave the thumbs-up gesture. I tried to appear nonchalant while scanning the sky for MiGs.

We stayed on that western course for 30 minutes, flying over waterless country the color of a lion's pelt. It did not have the look of a hospitable land. Suddenly there was the scar of a bush airstrip beneath us. The pilot circled the strip twice, waggling the plane's wingtips as a recognition signal. Then we went into a steep landing approach.

"Here goes nothing," I thought, crossing myself.

The landing on the DC-4's well-worn tires was surprisingly smooth, clouds of red dust pluming out from behind our wheels. I could see armed Africans standing by the oil drums they'd manhandled off the strip to permit us to land.

"I hope they're the cavalry and not the Indians," I shouted at Mongo. He smiled, but I could tell from his expression he didn't understand.

The DC-4 braked to a stop and Mongo pushed open the rear door. There were Africans beneath us — some in uniform, some not — waving their Kalashnikov automatic rifles and smiling up at us. As the DC-4's engines coughed twice and died, I could hear African women trilling a chant of welcome.

I had reached Jonas Savimbi's guerrilla kingdom, one of the few places in the world where free men were engaged in combat against Russians, East Germans and their Cuban ideological mercenaries. And, as the Frenchman gave the thumbs-up signal, cranked the DC-4's asthmatic engines and took off into the sunset, I had a feeling I was going to earn my writer's fee.

It would make a more dramatic tale to write that I rushed straight from the airstrip into combat. Unfortunately, it would be untrue. Guerrilla conflicts, like conventional wars, can be very much a case of hurry-up-and-wait. I was not to hear a shot fired in anger for nearly a week.

At the bush airstrip, near Likua in UNITA-held southeastern Angola, I was met by Maj. Jean Bock, a terrier of a man, scarcely five feet tall. Bock was missing his left hand and most of his forearm (a somewhat inauspicious omen in an officer who described himself as a demolitions expert). Still, nobody's perfect.

In remarkably good English, Bock welcomed me to that third of Angola wrested from the Luanda government and its 20,000 Cuban troops by Savimbi's UNITA fighting men. As night fell — and it falls quickly in Africa — we clambered aboard a captured East German Star truck and lurched off over a dirt track that was scarcely more than a glorified game trail.

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While we jolted toward the guerrilla camp that was to be my temporary home, Bock explained the strategic situation to me:

With the exception of one or two heavily garrisoned towns supplied by air, all of Cuando-Cubango Province (where I now was) was under rebel control, as was most of Moxico to the north and Bie to the west. Part of Kunene Province also was under UNITA control, but the two zones were not contiguous. The 46-year-old Savimbi was far away, but I would surely meet him during the course of my stay. Heavy fighting was going on along the 836-mile length of the Benguela Railroad — from Zaire to the Atlantic Ocean. The East German-run line was open part of the way, but not an ounce of copper had made it from Zambia or Zaire to the sea in more than 10 years. It would take me a month's march to reach the railroad; my best bet for seeing some action was to wait for a possible guerrilla attack on Mavinga, a town 70 miles to the north.

The Cubans, Bock said, had sustained about 3,000 casualties in the early years of the civil war, 1975-77, but now confined themselves largely to the big cities, where they were harassed by UNITA urban guerrillas. At first, the Luanda regime had relied heavily on black Cubans, feeling they would get along better with government troops, but they had proved unreliable; now the Cubans UNITA encountered were usually whites. Cuban wounded were flown to Eastern Europe for hospitalization, and their dead were buried in Angola so as not to damage morale in Cuba.

The East Germans, Bock reported, were in charge of intelligence and counterintelligence, ran the railways and provided advisers for SWAPO and the Katangan brigands. The Russians had advisers in every government ministry, ran the fishing industry, had direct command of the air force and navy and exercised operational control over the army. Most of Angola's Russian tanks — T-54s and T-62s — had Cuban drivers and gunners, although they were training Angolans. Cuban soldiers were in force around the oilfields in the Cabinda enclave north of the Zaire River, which is not contiguous with the rest of Angola.

During daylight hours, Bock conceded, armored columns of government troops, supported by helicopters and MiGs, could go pretty much where they wanted. "But the night belongs to us," he added with a smile. Since the Russians, East Germans and Cubans wanted to play down their presence, they seldom exposed themselves, and Savimbi held none of them prisoner (about a month after I left, UNITA gunners downed an Antonov transport, capturing two Russians and a Cuban).

The communist military strategy, Bock said, appeared to be to retain control over the population centers, the Cabinda oilfields and the principal arteries of communication, and to clear the Benguela railway if they could. They were trying to train the Angolan army to the point where it could operate on its own in the bush, but without a great deal of success. They had created a long-range penetration force, whose principal mission was to kill Savimbi; I would see how much success they had enjoyed in that.

Politically, Bock said, the communists were conducting a

disinformation campaign against Savimbi by linking him with the South Africans, pressing for recognition of the Luanda regime by the United States and trying to keep in force the Clark Amendment — a self-denying ordinance that since 1976 had forbidden the U.S. by law from aiding Savimbi or any other anti-government Angolan leader. They were keeping pressure on Zaire and Zambia to cut Savimbi's links with the outside world, and pressing for a SWAPO victory in South West Africa that would also have this effect.

As for Savimbi's military and political tactics, Bock said, I would have to wait until I met with the guerrilla leader to learn what they were.

At a UNITA roadblock our truck slid to a stop in one of the clouds of dust that were to be my constant companions for the next two weeks. Ahead, in a grove of leafless thorn trees, I could see the flickering flames of torches and campfires.

The torches were held by African women and children who, when we got out of the truck, broke into a long, repetitious song of welcome for the stranger who had come from so far away to visit them. In the preliterate society that most of rural Angola still is, despite 400 years of Portuguese rule, songs and poetry take the place of newspapers and books. The singing of women and children in the camps, and of Savimbi's guerrillas on the march, was always with me during my days in Angola.

Bock led me down the ranks of singing women to a square grass hut set apart in a grove of trees.

"This will be your home while you're here," he explained. "Your things will be safe here. There's a latrine behind the hut. Be careful where you step: there are snakes and tarantulas. Salome will bring you a canteen of water and a lantern. If you want food, just ask for it. You must be tired, so we'll talk tomorrow."

My 12-by-12-foot hut, constructed without benefit of a single nail, was made of bundles of reeds and grass lashed to wooden poles with strips of bark. It contained a large bed, a table and two benches, constructed of the same material and dug into the sandy soil.

On the bed was a rough blue blanket to supplement the blanket and poncho I'd brought with me. As I was to discover in the days to come, these cool, airy huts are the perfect architectural response to a climate that is hot and dry during the day, but bitterly cold in the predawn hours.

I threw my gear on one of the benches, blew out the kerosene lantern — a strip of canvas webbing stuffed through the tin top of a glass jar — fell into bed and slept the sleep of the just.

Where there is no electricity, one lives by the cycle of the sun. I woke at dawn to the melodious laughter of African women and the smell of wood smoke. Soon, Salome — a middle-aged woman with a shy smile — was at the doorless entry to my hut with a basin of water to wash in, a mug of sugared but milkless tea (we never had coffee) and a tin plate of surprisingly tasty fried dough. As she swept the dirt floor with a bundle of twigs, she explained that her three women helpers would wash and sew for me, and that I had but to ask for anything else I wanted.

To be the guest of guerrillas is, in a sense, to be their prisoner. I was

dependent on my UNITA hosts for food, water and transport. When I walked around the camp, an armed guard followed me. If I wanted to talk to Maj. Bock, a runner was sent to fetch him. I pretty much had to go where Bock wanted me to go, and to see what he wanted me to see. I certainly could not go where he **didn't** want me to, nor to see what he **didn't** want me to. In the featureless bush of southeastern Angola, I would not have lasted a week on my own. I couldn't leave Angola until Savimbi was ready to let me go. My single great safeguard was that, at a point, Savimbi's interest and my own coincided: to get me out of Angola alive so I could tell his story.

Savimbi's 16,000 troops and 5,000 militiamen, organized in regular battalions of 500 men and guerrilla groups of 50, live spartan lives. While the food is better and more plentiful in the camps than in the field, officers and men alike exist on a diet of cornmeal or cassava flour, supplemented by an occasional cabbage, whatever game meat or fish happens to be available (we shot game on the plains and fished in the swamps) and wild honey.

As a guest, I got the best of everything: South African canned meat and rice or noodles for lunch, a thick, nutritious soup for dinner. A great luxury was fresh fruit from South Africa (South Africa sells Savimbi food, vehicles and medical supplies, paid for with funds donated by conservative African and Arab states).

Whether in camp or on the march, we never went hungry. But thirst was our constant companion. In the flat, featureless bush of Cuando-Cubango, there are few rivers or streams. Water from the swamps, often black as coffee, we flavored with the juice of the passion fruit, which gave it a rather pleasant, mildly astringent taste.

On the move, we traveled either by truck (the East German Star or a West German Mercedes; the former was more dependable, the latter more comfortable) or on foot, over trails hacked out of the bush. So rough are these trails that vehicles average no more than 8 mph. Frequently we traveled by night, both because it was cooler and there was no danger then from government aircraft.

With us went Salome and her team of women, most of them wives of UNITA guerrillas, to do our cooking.

At night, if there was a camp or village nearby, we slept in huts; otherwise, we slept under shelter-halves or scraps of canvas. The earth, broken with a machete and covered with grass, served as our bed.

Savimbi's officers and men (some of whom have been fighting for 15 years) are not paid, and all are in uniform "for the duration."

"When the war is won," explained Bock, "will be time enough to speak of pay." There are, to the best of my knowledge, no mercenaries serving on the ground with Savimbi; the 500 Angola-born Portuguese serving in his forces receive exactly the same pay as the Africans: nothing.

Discipline in the UNITA army is strict; there is no drunkenness. (Bock explained: "We're not prigs, we just don't happen to have any liquor at this time.") Cigarettes were in short supply, but morale seemed high. The men sang as they marched — praise-songs of Savimbi, recitations of UNITA's victories and chants deriding Eduardo dos Santos' Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which forms the Marxist government of Angola.

In a few days, I grew used to rising at dawn and going to bed with the setting sun. I misplaced my shaving mirror and grew a beard. I lost weight and my muscles hardened. I became less conscious of bug bites and of the deep slashes inflicted on my arms and face by the thorny underbrush. Washington seemed worlds away, as indeed it was, and I felt strangely content.

I visited training camps, schools, agricultural settlements and hospitals run by UNITA. There were rare moments of great beauty, such as the night we stumbled upon the looming shapes of a herd of trumpeting elephants in a salt pan, their tusks white as silver in the moonlight.

Savimbi's Ovimbundu guerrillas were curious about the outside world. What was America like? Did we have wild animals? Were all Americans white?

Would we help UNITA against the Russians and the Cubans who were, they understood, America's enemies, too? I found it hard to explain the rationale of the 1976 Clark Amendment, which by law prohibited the U.S. from aiding a people in revolt against a Marxist government imposed upon them against their will by foreign bayonets.

The days faded into one another in a mosaic of heat, dust, thirst, boredom and disappointment. And then one morning, a smiling Maj. Bock brought the news I had been waiting for: UNITA guerrillas were about to launch a major attack on the town of Mavinga, one of the last government strongholds in Cuanda-Cubango, and I was to join them.

Within the hour, we broke camp and were on our way. The days of waiting were over and, for me, the war the world forgot was about to begin.

MEN AND ARMS

According to Jonas Savimbi, UNITA's armed forces are composed of 16,000 regular troops and 5,000 militia (opposed by 50,000 government troops, 20,000 Cubans, 3,000 East Germans and 1,500 Russians). UNITA forces are organized in regular battalions of 500 men and in guerrilla groups of 50. Smaller UNITA urban-guerrilla rings operate in most of Angola's major cities.

The regular battalions (Savimbi declines to say how many there are) operate south of the Benguela Railroad, the guerrilla groups of 50 north of the line.

All volunteers (there is no conscription in UNITA territory) do a standard five-month basic training course, which includes such staples as weapons instruction, hygiene, bushcraft, map reading, tactics and physical training. After a year in the field, all soldiers return to a training camp for a three-month refresher course.

Savimbi says he has 500 Angolan Portuguese serving in UNITA's ranks (his personal bodyguard is a Portuguese from his native village), plus a smaller number of mixed-blood Angolans. Savimbi says 2,000 Angolan Portuguese are serving with the MPLA. Since the leadership of the MPLA is predominantly mixed-blood, there probably are more mestizos in the MPLA's ranks than in UNITA's.

Most of the Portuguese — many of whom served in the colonial army — seem to be either UNITA officers or non-commissioned officers, although I saw at least two Portuguese enlisted men. Relations between white and black UNITA soldiers seem to be genuinely warm and fraternal.

Insofar as I was able to learn, there are no mercenaries (other than the pilots mentioned in the accompanying story) — and, indeed, no whites other than the Angolan Portuguese — serving with UNITA. If there are any, they technically would not be mercenaries, since neither UNITA officers nor men are paid.

While UNITA troops are armed with a variety of equipment, the basic weapon for regular battalions is the AKM or one of its variants. In each squad, there seemed to be at least one RPG. Grenades of both the pineapple and stick types were observed.

The armament of guerrilla groups and urban-terrorist rings tends to be more eclectic than that of the regular battalions. These carry AK-47s, .30-caliber U.S. carbines (provided in 1975, courtesy of CIA), M1 rifles, Czech Brnos, British Enfields and a variety of handguns, of both Eastern and Western manufacture.

Most of UNITA's instructors are trained in Morocco. A few, such as Savimbi and some of his more senior lieutenants, were trained in communist China. A third and even smaller group was trained by the South Africans.

Regular battalions are used only in set-piece battles, such as the assault on Mavinga. The 50-man guerrilla groups, which seldom act in teams of more than three units (150 men), are employed in tasks such as ambushing armored trains trying to shoot their way down the Benguela Railroad, and in bushwhacking MPLA/Cuban patrols. Urban guerrillas toss grenades into Cuban cantonments, lay mines and assault motor-transport parks.

The tactics of the two sides are predicated on two facts: the MPLA and their Cuban/Russian/East German allies have a monopoly on armor and air power, which enables them to control the population centers and most of the principal communications arteries, at least during daylight hours. UNITA forces must assemble quietly for an assault, attack quickly and then disperse into the bush, setting up ambushes for the helicopter-borne troops and armored columns that usually can be counted on to come to the relief of beleaguered MPLA units.

While UNITA has a few captured Stalin Organs (122mm rockets), SAM-7 missiles, 12.7mm dual-purpose guns, 75mm recoilless rifles and bazookas of both Eastern and Western manufacture, Savimbi has no artillery as such.

From what I could see, UNITA suffered from no particular shortage of small-arms ammunition. Training exercises were conducted under live fire, and most soldiers seemed to have three or four magazines for their AKMs.

UNITA soldiers are lightly but decently equipped: All have uniforms of a sort — hats, boots, a cartridge belt, a couple of canteens and a blanket or two. The larger camps have a hospital with a doctor or two in attendance. In the field, it's pretty much just paramedics.

The government's attempt to organize long-range penetration groups to operate within UNITA-held territory does not appear to have been effective, primarily because they do not know the country and cannot count on the local population for guides. —S.H.

(End of Part I; To be continued. Next: Battle for Mavinga)

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